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First of all, let me express my gratitude for the astonishingly favorable response to the first issue of COLLECTOR'S DREAM. We literally didn't get a single negative letter. In fact, we're kind of disappointed that we received so few dissenting opinions or amplifications for the articles we published. Please, fans! *We do not know everything. We know very little*, and we want to learn more. Stop making it seem otherwise, or we'll get swelled heads and the quality of this magazine will take a nosedive. Send us articles and letters of comment. If they're good, we'll print them. A specialty magazine like this one depends on interaction with its reading public, so let's *interact*, people!!

Next, we're still trying to hustle up some *advertising*. COLLECTOR'S DREAM is a worldwide publication, sold in Britain and Europe (we're working on Australia & New Zealand) as well as throughout North America. Your ads will be seen in a wider market than is generally available to most American comic fan magazines. Each issue of COLLECTOR'S DREAM will *always remain in print*, so that your ads will draw longer as well. Examine our rates: we give discounts for repeat ads, and the prices are quite competitive.

Our illustrious Post Office has thrown us a couple of curves. January 1 they abolished the publishers' discount rate to the U.S.; on March 1 they raised the rates once again. So we can no longer offer fifty copy dealer lots for $8.50 (15 cents per copy, plus $1.00 postage). Instead, we will offer COLLECTOR'S DREAM in sixty copy lots for $9.95 postpaid. The extra ten copies will help the dealer offset the cost of postage included in the above amount. We also offer a 120 copy lot for $19.00 postpaid; and you can pick up the next six issues in 60 and 120 copy lots for $55.00 and $105.00 respectively, postpaid, if you pay in advance.

Our features this issue include the second editorial on MONEY by George Olshevsky; our first letter column; a TITANIC and DEFINITIVE article on the pulp villains by Don Hutchison, which will ultimately form a chapter in his forthcoming book on the pulps; the first few episodes of Don Rosa's delightful PERTWILLABY PAPERS; another WARDWORLD; the first of Joe Krolik's BRAINSTORMS; free plugs and an ad or two. Enjoy, people!

—George Olshevsky

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[*COLLECTOR'S DREAM reserves the right to print any letters of comment on its contents, unless the writer specifically requests us not to print. Unsigned letters will be ignored.*]

BACK PATS

Dear G&T:

Fantastic. That's all I can say about THE COLLECTOR'S DREAM. So enclosed is a check for $4.00 toward a one-year subscription.

DALE RUSSELL, Chico CA

Dear Sirs:

...Very professional and good reading. Keep it up!

DAVE DONOVAN, Ames IA

Dear George:

I enjoyed your first issue of THE COLLECTOR'S DREAM. It was informative and refreshing. I hope you continue publication...

JOHN S. IAVARONE, Albany NY

Dear G&T:

I received my copy of the MARVEL COMICS INDEX Part 3 yesterday and much to my surprise there was a copy of COLLECTOR'S DREAM No. 1 included. I promptly sat down and read it, and frankly I think you have another winner. I have enclosed a check for $4.00 for a 12 issue subscription to COLLECTOR'S DREAM. The MARVEL COMICS INDEX Part 3 was well worth the wait.

ROSS W. McALLISTER, Tacoma WA

All our long-suffering subscribers received a free COLLECTOR'S DREAM along with their INDEX Part Threes. Merry Christmas, everyone!

Dear George and Tony:

I would be delighted to subscribe to the next four issues of the MARVEL COMICS INDEX. Please find enclosed a money order for $15.00 as payment. Also, please find enclosed a money order for $4.00 in payment for a subscription to COLLECTOR'S DREAM. I enjoyed issue No. 1 tremendously and found the basis of George Olshevsky's grading method ingenious.

You have done a very fine job with the INDEX in spite of the great effort it must have taken. The history of the Marvel Universe will demand a greater effort and I hope you are successful. I have thought such a compilation of Marvel history would be interesting if well done and believe you are capable of doing it.

THOMAS A. MURRAY, Vancouver B.C.

The $15.00 INDEX subscription is a thing of the past, unfortunately. It pains us to note that the double-barrelled postal rate increases in January and March—for no reason that we have been able to determine—have forced us to raise our rates to $18.00 for the INDEX and $5.00 for the DREAM. Actually, it wasn't just *the postal rates, but they were the last straw.*

DELAYS

Dear George and Tony:

I received my issue of Part 3 of the MARVEL COMICS INDEX on January 17, about three weeks after it was mailed. Sorry about my impatient letter to you about it, but if it was really available in October as advertised, why wasn't it mailed until the end of December?

JAMME COY, Saratoga Spring NY

INDEX wasn't available in October as advertised, due to a paper shortage occasioned by a strike or three this summer. We advertised in advance because our suppliers assured us they would be available. For a fuller account, see the Author's Note in INDEX NO. 4, which should be available as you read this.

Dear George:

Heartily, highly and unreservedly approve and recommend COLLECTOR'S DREAM NO. 1. (This statement available for use as a testimonial for advertising purposes, at a nominal fee.)

Far be it from me to say that this worthy enterprise shall come to nought for want of $4.00. Here it is, torn from the living heart of my bank account—my sacrifice to your greatness. Now, gross bunny, where's my copy of INDEX NO. 3: *Avengers, Ex-Avengers and the Unemployed?* As a subscriber since 5 / 29 / 76, a taxpayer since 4 / 01 / 69 and a citizen since 8 / 31 / 51, I feel this question is Timely (aheh) since No. 3 came out 3 weeks ago, and I Marvel (aough!) that mine hasn't already come to a soft landing in my mail slot, already. Really.

There—that oughta hold 'im.

mail

ROBERT W. MAIN, Toronto, Ont.

P.S. Hope you had a good Christmas—like a time traveler giving you a copy of the Marvel Wall Chart from 2113—Happy New Year. Heads up! Here comes the future!

Dear George:

Hey, listen, I'm sorry, see? Wot an embarrassment! My letter of 12 / 27 / 76, mailed 12 / 29 / 76 crossed your parcel mailed 12 / 28 / 76, rec'd yesterday. I shoulda known.

Sorry I called ya a rutabaga in de heat of de moment, but ya knows I only say these things cos I luvs ya, arf, arf.

No immediate comments on INDEX NO. 3, haven't run it through my software yet. Besides, you know me, I'm never satisfied, always looking for the next one.

Thanks for the (free?) copy of COLLECTOR'S DREAM. Got one at Bakka (of course) but I'll find a home for it. You can consider it as starting the subscription, if you will.

As a professional (I work in a warehouse), your packaging gets top marks—air bubble envelope, corrugated cardboard stiffener *and* a custom comic bag (is that 3 mil?)! (This statement *also* available for use in advertising at a nominal fee!)

Must register enthusiasm for the Marvel Timeline Wallchart project. Won't dispute primacy of concept with you, but will claim an independent discovery, though presently still without the resources for implementation. Go it, with my blessings!

Yr., etc. and happy snowshoeing,
ROBERT W. MAIN, Toronto, Ont.

That'll teach ya to write us in haste! Two letters, indeed! Hah! So you work in a warehouse, eh? You know what a warehouse is, don't ya? It's a person who turns into a house when the moon is full.

GRADING MURRAY WARD

Dear George and Tony:

...I agree with everything that Murray Ward said about the SF comics. It was also a well-written column and I hope that Mr. Ward does a column such as this every issue.

Finally: "Towards a Uniform System of Comic Book Grading". What can I say? IT WORKS! When I first saw the article, I thought to myself, "Oh boy, here's another one of somebody's useless systems for grading comics." I'd like to retract that statement. The system which was presented is the best system that I've come across...

JAMES B. ORIBINE, Burlington, Ont.

Never fear about Murray Ward! He has sent us half a dozen columns in advance already! And his neighbor Joe Krolik makes his debut this issue. The grading system is an elaboration—with numbers—of the system Terry Stroud of the American Comic Book Company developed years ago.

FUTURE DELAYS

G&T:

...I find it hard to believe that a magazine such as yours can be so intelligent and well-informed, and still just cost 30 cents *and be published monthly!* This is the first fan-published periodical that I have sat down and read cover to cover, since the last issue of *Squa Tront!* I will recommend it to all my customers and do intend to use it for advertising...

CAPTAIN LIGHTFOOT, Longview TX

Right on three out of four; we are *intelligent and well-informed* [*ahem!*] *and will cost 30 cents to eternity if we can help it, but we're not published monthly. Yet. The masthead of No. 1 carried a bit of wishful thinking. These little magazines are harder to put out than we thought.*

TOO THIN?

Gentlemen:

We and our customers enjoyed your first issue—it was well laid out and our only beef would be for more pages (impossible till you get more ads and circulation, of course). We look forward to the promised article on comic book repair with some anticipation.

Noticed in the indicia that CDM is monthly, so we enclose $7.50 plus $1.00 postage for 50 copies of No. 2. Much success in all your future projects, and many thanx.

THE HAUNTED BOOKSHOP
4876 Delta Street
Ladner, B.C., Canada V4K 2T8

Ads and circulation will help greatly!

Also, please note that the aforementioned postal rate increases have caused us to change our dealer lots to 60 copies for $9.95 postpaid from $8.50 for 50 copies postpaid. Finally, we have requested Bill Sarill of the Restoration Lab, P.O. Box 729, Cambridge MA 02139, to write a series of columns for us. We do not know whether he will be able to do this, but we hope he will. He is an acknowledged master of the art of repairing comic books, with a vast repertoire of techniques at his fingertips.

MARVEL FUN BOOKS

Dear George:

Your three INDEXes finally arrived, almost one month in the mails. I must say the results were well worth the wait, though it arrived too late to be of any help to me in producing Stan's new MARVEL SUPERHEROES FUN BOOK TWO. It was completed about a week ago, a month ahead of deadline, yet. (*Trying to make us feel bad, eh?*)

Recently I also produced twelve front and back covers for Grosset and Dunlap (Tempo Books) for Marvel books: mazes, word webs, crosswords, etc. which will be available soon. I will be starting on another new Marvel project soon. Best of luck with your future INDEXes. By the way, put me on your list for COLLECTOR'S DREAM—would like to include it with all my other comics material. Cheque enclosed.

OWEN McCARRON
Comic Book World
3678 High Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3K 4V7

CONRAD COMMENTS

Dear George:

...The interview with Tim Conrad was superb and even though I haven't been that excited by his art (too much line for line imitation of Smith, which in itself wouldn't be bad except that he also imitates Smith's faults as well as his strengths). I was very excited by the interview as Conrad is extremely articulate and he combines that with opinions which are both intelligent and worthwhile. It is definitely the best interview with a comic artist that I've read in years...

I'm glad to see you have an excellent and reliable staff artist in the person of Franc Reyes, as his excellent graphics combined with your professional layout add the perfect touch...

JAMES VAN HISE

Tim Conrad and Franc Reyes also possess the laudable quality of doing their work ahead of deadline, something which we have yet to learn ourselves. It is truly a joy to deal with them. Jim Van Hise publishes Rocket's Blast / Comic Collector, *fandom's longest-running publication, available from him at 6351, S.W. 43rd Street, Miami FL 33155. Write him for details.*

DC INDEX??

Boys:

Enclosed is a cheque for $4.00 for a subscription to COLLECTOR'S DREAM. Your first issue was both fun and informative. The run-down on G&T's Dreams was real exciting--I'm particularly interested in seeing a project like the MARVEL COMICS INDEX that would cover DC comics. And your ideas for merchandise (the wall chart, and the maps) sound like fun, too.

The interview with Conrad was solid and captivating. I like the use of group conversations instead of more interviewing. I came away with more of an idea of who Tim Conrad is and why. How about going after some of the writers and artists who work on comics regularly, as well as free-lancers who approach the work as if it were love-making. Suggestions: Mary Skrenes, Ramona Fradon, Marie Severin, Steve Englehart, Walt Simonson, Murphy Anderson, Cary Bates, Mike Grell. Maybe even Jenette Kahn, the noveau grande dame of DC.

Brief comment to Murray—the kind of SF you want dominated DC's (and a few other companies') SF line in the late 50's to late 60's. I think the increased pessimism about peace, disbelief in American manifest destiny, and fear over continued ecological rape perpetrated by profit-seekers are the main differences between that decade and now, and are the reasons for the different emphasis in SF comics. That *anyone* survives at all is the measure of our joy for these futures.

DENYS HOWARD, Portland, OR

Sirs:

I am sending $15.00 for parts 4 to 7 of

mail

the Index. I am really impressed with No. 2 and No. 3. In fact, I just don't see how you can improve any. They were really better than great. I am new to the Marvel World (age 25 and new?) after being an active part of DC for 20 years. I never understood about all the Avengers and how there are three Goliaths and all and now I do. Thanks for printing them and I hope you can think about doing the same with DC.

ED JONES, JR., Gahanna, OH

Gentlemen:

Keep up the good work with the MARVEL INDEXES. I for one would also like to see a DC Index similar to the Marvel.

LEON VERGETIS, Brown Deer, WI

The first DC Index we will attempt will be SUPERMAN, which might see print sometime next year. Joe Krolik has a complete run of the title and will most likely do the groundwork for the book. More than that we haven't formulated yet. The project might collapse if we find ourselves unable to obtain the rights, for example.

ROY WHO?

Dear George:

Thanks muchly for the copies of the Avengers INDEX and your COLLECTOR'S DREAM magazine. It was good to see the Tim Conrad interview, if only because he (unlike some artists) *at least* recognizes that, if he doesn't enjoy the stories in comics as much as the art, it's not because the writers are necessarily bad; they are simply writing to a different set of standards than the comics fan of ten or twenty years' standing. Tim and I will, I'm sure, continue to have our differences; he will continue in his own way to be artistically correct (*maybe*), and I will continue to be commercially correct (if I'm *lucky*). Or maybe we'll both be wrong.

For your info and his, though: the Marlene Dietrich thing was not even considered when Tim's Kline story was "fixed" (whether you take that to mean "improved" or "neutered" depends on your point of view; mine should be obvious). It's simply that I didn't feel that the woman looked attractive; nor do I think she looked like Marlene Dietrich, for that matter. And John Romita has very seldom done anything "incredibly bad"; that's just Tim's hurt feelings speaking.

Another correction: it's not true that Tim would have "no say" in who inked his work at Marvel if he didn't. Since I'm as interested in our *Almuric* adaptation's selling as he is, probably more so, I'd want to get his thoughts on the matter. Knowing how much work he's put into it, it would take an absolute deadline emergency (unlikely to occur) to make me give the work to someone who would change it substantially. I like Tim and his work, but I'm frankly disappointed that, after having nothing of his work changed at Marvel except a few faces on a first job in a couple of years, he should so misjudge my attitude toward it. Barry and I, for instance, did CONAN together for well over two years, and virtually every inker was approved by Barry in advance—Sal Buscema, Tom Sutton, whoever. That doesn't mean that he (or I) liked everything they did to it; one can never be sure what an inker will do to a job, especially one with delicate artwork. But when I work with an artist who has an interest in seeing his work inked in a particular way, I have made every possible effort to get the work inked that way if it made any commercial sense. And if it didn't, I was honest enough to tell the artist that I needed something different from what he wanted. Since I (as editor) was more responsible for the sales of the book than he (or myself as writer), my decision had to be the final one, though. I couldn't have enjoyed the reasonably good relations I had with such talented artists as Barry Smith, Gil Kane, John Buscema, Neal Adams and others if I hadn't considered their wishes.

But, enough of that. The tension between editor, artist and writer in comics is probably an inevitable one; as I said, at least Tim has a fairly reasonable (if occasionally disappointing) conception of what's at stake.

ROY THOMAS, Los Angeles CA

Anybody out there who doesn't recognize the person who has contributed ten years of his life to making Marvel Comics the most intricate and exciting books ever published, take ten lashes with a wet noodle. At this stage in our development, it is gratifying to see that even the professionals take us seriously. Now all we have to do is try to persuade them to take a few minutes out of their schedules to write us some articles! The quest for truth involves examination of as many different viewpoints as possible.

EDITORIAL

By George Olshevsky

Before I get into this editorial, the second installment of MONEY, THE REAL COLLECTOR'S DREAM, let me express my gratitude for all your cards and letters. As a result of G & T's publications, my correspondence has increased *tenfold*. I'll provide an answer for each letter which requires one, but I can't guarantee being able to do so within a reasonable period of time; I can only guarantee that I'll read every letter I receive. I hope that what I have to say will continue to maintain your interest.

Sometime shortly after January snow turns into February slush, an expectant stir develops throughout comic fandom. This stir increases in intensity and fervor until the beginning of April, when it climaxes in the publication of the new *Comic Book Price Guide* by Bob Overstreet. Many weeks before the book actually appears, some dealers are already hawking it, promising that you will be "the first one on the block with a new *Price Guide*" if you place your order with them as soon as possible. Other dealers sell sneak previews of the new prices. As soon as the book is published, dealers race through their stocks to bring their prices into line, while collectors who own expensive books rub their hands in glee as they learn how they made out in the current year's version of the annual comic collectors' sweepstakes. "Wow! *Action* No. 1 is up to $4000! Wow!!"

By far the single most frequently asked question about any comic book, among the clientele of the Silver Snail Comic Shop where I hang out, is, "How much is this book worth?" The second question is, "Do you think it will go up?"

Obviously, there is a tremendous force among the rank and file comic fans and dealers which is inexorably pushing the prices of even recent books even higher. This desire on the part of the owners of collections of comic books to see the market value of their accumulations rise as fast as possible is the "first cause" of comic book inflation. Last issue I went over some of the mechanisms by which this market value is made to increase—mechanisms which are not in themselves *causes* of comic book inflation but rather devices designed to speed the rate at which the collector and his money are parted. This superconsciousness of money, coupled with the desire to make a fast buck by latching onto the express train of inflation, is so pervasive in comic fandom that there is every reason to believe that beating comic book inflation is a pipe dream. What chance has the lone collector trying to conserve his meager funds, what chance have I, of holding back the flood, when even small children are already wheeling and dealing? Rather little, I would imagine. Nevertheless, in this editorial I will attempt to address the problem with some semblance of objectivity. Let me title this installment

BEATING COMIC BOOK INFLATION

I. Psychological aspects of inflation: the "growth" fallacy.

Before entering into an analysis of the avenues open to those wishing to spread their collecting dollar further, let me hold forth somewhat about a topic which—as Harlan Ellison would say—"elevates my gorge". If you detect telltale flecks of foam appearing at my lips signifying rage and frustration, bear with me. I assure you that I *do* return to sanity eventually.

For reasons which are buried deep in human psychology, we have come to accept and even worship the idea that as time goes on things should cost more—not just comic books but *everything*. This is completely irrational. All other things being equal, there is simply no *a priori* reason why a car, a house, a chunk of meat, a piece of furniture or a candy bar should cost more this year than last. Why should a newsstand comic book cost 30 or 35 cents in 1977 but only 25 cents in 1976? Why should the landlord raise the rent on my apartment every year even though he has never exerted any effort whatsoever to upgrade its condition or made it more habitable? Why should my paycheck increase through a cost of living raise even though I am doing exactly the same boring work year after year? The stock explanation is "rising costs"; but this is a smokescreen. Nobody ever tells me why costs should rise in the first place.

Some economists might claim to have the answer to the rising costs question. They might invoke scarcity of resources and increased demand, for example. Beware! Economists as a group are ultimately nothing more than trained apologists for human greed. They seem to do nothing but devise endless stopgap and last-ditch measures to shore up the dismal fiscal situation, never attacking the inflation itself, which has waxed unabated since money was invented. I might add, with good reason: if there were no economic crises, economists would be out of a job.

The *real* reason there is a global inflation is the absolute, unvarying need of the corporations which produce consumer goods to show not just a profit but an *increased* profit each year. This need for corporate growth arises because of a psychological defect in people: *increases* in profits attract investors and working capital, without which a corporation will wither away. The fundamental purpose of any corporation is to *make money*, not to produce goods or to make the world a better place in which to live. If a corporation is formed to make money by producing goods, then it will; but there will come a time when its profits can increase only at the expense of the quality of the goods being produced. (For example, a car is built to deteriorate after a certain period of time, in order to force the owner to purchase another, newer model. This is particularly true of American cars, which are acquiring a reputation for shoddiness rivalled only by that attributed to postwar Japanese goods.) It is when the quality of the goods being produced drops (and / or the price rises) that it becomes apparent that the needs of the corporations and the consuming public are actually quite divergent.

To give you another example, closer to home: In 1940, the average comic book was 64 pages long, sold for a dime and carried four or fewer pages of advertising. In 1977, the average comic book costs 35 cents, is 32 pages long and

Dealer's-eye-view of the typical comic book collector?!

Illustration by Franc Reyes

carries at least a dozen pages of advertising. Further, 1940 comics are generally an inch or more wider than those sold today. So, not only has the unit cost of a comic book more than tripled in 37 years, but the page count has been halved, the page size has been shaved and the ratio of ad pages to story pages has more than quadrupled.

One would expect, with the improvement in graphic arts technology over a 37-year period, that comic books would now cost *less* to produce per copy. Certainly there is no shortage of paper, ink or staples to justify the *thirtyfold* combined inflation / deterioration in quality experienced by comic books! The reason that comics cost more now is *corporate greed*: the paper mills have to make *more* money, the ink manufacturers have to make *more* money, the staple makers have to make *more* money, and of course the comic book publishers have to make *more* money, too. The chain of inflation can be continued right back to the price of steel, chemicals and pulp, the labor involved in rendering these raw materials into items suitable for comic book manufacture, and the working capital required to do this conversion. Every step of the process has to turn a profit for the organization concerned, and each year this profit must show growth or the organization is doomed. Since increases in cost are never passed along linearly but always at a percentage (geometrically), it is small wonder that prices skyrocket and quality plummets. It is *growth* which is the demon, multiplied by the number of steps required in the manufacture of the goods.

By now you are asking yourselves what this tirade has to do with the inflation in the price of back issue comic books. After all, these items have already suffered their share of corporate greed. Why should *their* prices rise? Well, the connection is pretty subtle. What growth-generated inflation does is create an atmosphere in which the increase in prices each year is regarded as a *natural state of affairs*. Now, there are certain healthy reasons for the prices of back issue comics to rise, foremost among which is the very real fact that the supply of old comics is dwindling and the demand is increasing. The way things *should be* is a near zero inflation in living costs, plus a 5-10% yearly inflation in the average cost of back issue comics. Instead, there is a 10-15% yearly cost of living inflation and a 25% back issue comic inflation. Against a background of 10-15%, 25% looks almost reasonable; but 25% is an *outrage!*

II. What to do?

Quite frankly, I can see no way out of the inflationary spiral. The corporations are too big, the idea of growth too firmly wedged in the corporate and public mind. Here are as many inflation-beating suggestions as I could muster, none very hopeful. I'll elaborate one by one in the sections following.

(1) Organize fandom into keeping the prices low.
(2) Discourage other people from becoming comic collectors.
(3) Hope for the inflation to "plateau".
(4) Boycott dealers who you think are overcharging.
(5) Sell your books (if you have any to sell) below market value and hope the buyer passes the savings on, or at least appreciates his good fortune.
(6) Learn to haggle.
(7) Quit collecting comics.
(8) Send incorrect information to, or boycott, the *Price Guide*, so that it becomes valueless as a reference tool and thereby loses its influence among fans.
(9) Steal comic books from dealers' tables at conventions (we try to think of *everything*, gang!).
(10) Gather up a massive collection of prime books, so that the inflation works for you.

III. Organize.

I have heard that some comic fans have organized exclusive clubs in which the members buy, sell and trade among themselves at prices considerably below *Price Guide*. I know very little about such groups, but right now I don't think I'd be interested in becoming a member. It is my philosophy to try to sell my excess books for as much as I possibly can get, because the whole point of selling is to obtain money to purchase books I still need, and the more I get, the more I can buy. Suppose I were a member of such a group and I had a *Batman* No. 1 for sale. It would irk me considerably to have to sell the book to another member of the group for, say, $100, when I knew I could get $750 for it elsewhere. It would irk me even more if I sold the book to a group member for $100, only to have the buyer turn around and sell it for $750 himself.

"Economists as a group are ultimately nothing more than trained apologists for human greed."

For this reason, it seems to me that such "anti-inflation" groups are latently unstable and could easily break apart violently because of greed on the part of one or more members. I can only conclude that such groups deal almost exclusively in relatively low-priced items on which the price differences are not significant.

Let me repeat that I know very little about the structure of fandom's anti-inflation groups, and that I would appreciate greatly some correspondence on the subject. Maybe I've got it all wrong.

As for organizing comic fandom *at large* against inflation: Are you kidding??

IV. Discourage comic collecting.

To discourage people from entering the field, from grooving on comics, in order that the demand for back issues is lessened and the prices to collectors are lowered strikes me as the height of selfishness! I would like to think that by publishing the MARVEL COMICS INDEX and the COLLECTOR'S DREAM I am doing my small part to help fans everywhere enjoy their hobby more, and that I am interesting a few people out there who might not have seen anything in comic collecting before. If this means inflation, then so be it. I am certainly willing to support price increases because of the influx of new fans and collectors, and so should everybody in the field. It is true that we will obliterate comic book inflation if we kill the hobby itself; but this is obviously a case of the cure being worse than the disease. Our problem is not inflation itself, but to make sure that whatever inflation there is comes solely from benefits gained by fandom.

V. Hope for a "plateau".

There is some chance that, inflation, left to itself, could eventually go away. The reason for this is that as the prices of back issue comics continue to climb, they will approach a limit beyond which they cannot grow because there is *noboby* willing to buy them. When this happens, we call it "reaching a plateau". The problem is to try to figure out just how high this plateau is, and whether comics will reach their plateau in the next few months or in the next decade, or ever.

Let's try to make some predictions. There are something like two million philatelists in North America, and the most valuable philatelic items sell for about a quarter of a million dollars, or about an eighth of a dollar per person. On the other hand, there are about 100,000 comic fans of all kinds across the continent, which would indicate that the most valuable comic items should perhaps be selling for about $12,500 (one eighth of 100,000, in dollars). On this basis, I would predict that the most valuable books probably will climb for another year or two (from $8000, paid for a near mint copy of *Marvel Comics* No. 1 this year) *even if no significant influx of new fans enters the ranks*. These figures are to be taken as rough approximations only, and depend for their validity on the assumption that the 100,000 comic fans have much the same class makeup as the two million stamp collectors. Of course, we've also assumed that the prices of rare stamps have reached *their* pleateau, which may not be true.

My final opinion, borne out by the above, is that prices will *certainly* continue to climb for the next couple of years, beyond which who knows? (Probably higher and higher, but at a slower rate.)

VI. Boycott dealers who overcharge.

If you believe that you are being overcharged for your comics, then you have an obligation to discontinue doing business with that dealer. As I strongly emphasized last issue, only a fool pays more for an item than it is worth to him.

As for trying to organize a systematic boycott of dealers by collectors, I don't really hold out much hope for such a scheme. First of all, trying to organize a group of comic collectors to do *anything* together is very difficult (as was also pointed out in section III above). But imagine that you are a comic collector who is boycotting a dealer who has your *last ten wants* on his rack, at double *Price Guide*. How long do you think you could hold out? Be *honest!*

VII. Sell your books below market value.

Right! Sell them to *me!*

VIII. Learn to haggle.

Haggling is the art of persuading a dealer to part with his books for less than

the prices he is asking. Haggling also works in reverse, when you try to sell your books for as much as possible. Haggling requires assurance, poise, panache and assertiveness; in a word: confidence. I will say nothing beyond this, because I might undermine my own credibility as a haggler if I do. (A poker player never shows his hand when he folds, and a haggler never tells.) One final observation: a dealer can almost always be persuaded to part with a book for less than his asking price if the effort is determined enough and backed by hard cash. You can't haggle and then expect to have the dealer hold the book for you—unless you're very, very good.

IX. Quit collecting comics.

Astonishingly enough, this is one of the *best* ways the collector has of beating comic book inflation, and a method behind which—subject to the modifications I will indicate in the following paragraphs—I throw my wholehearted support.

By "quit collecting comics" I do not mean to get away from it all. Obviously, if you stop collecting comics entirely, the inflation in comic book prices ceases to have power over you. As far as you are concerned, you *have* beaten comic book inflation; but actually, you have not beaten inflation as much as inflation has beaten *you*. And of course, you'll never have those books that you once wanted...

I advocate a policy of patience, restraint, limited spending and limited collecting. First of all, you should decide for once and for all which books you definitely want, which books you might want if the price is right, and which books you don't want except if you can pick them up for next to nothing for quick and profitable resale. Eight years ago, I decided to concentrate on collecting only Marvels and Timelys with superhero strips in them, and ignore the rest. This never meant that I wasn't interested in other books; it meant that I would not collect them. Once I made this decision, it was very easy to pass up books like *Action* No. 1, *Whiz* No. 1, *Donald Duck Color* No 4 and others, not because they are "crummy" books (which they *aren't*) but because they do not fit into my domain. So it does not cause me anguish that *Action* No 1 is listed at $4200 in the current *Price Guide*, and if it rises to $10,000 in the future, I will still be unaffected.

Once I pick up the few remaining books I still need (two or perhaps three at last count), I will then be able to decide whether to begin collecting something else, or to stop entirely and devote myself to spreading the comic collecting gospel *via* editorials such as these.

Another way to restrain yourself and your collecting might be to avoid purchasing any comics which cost more than a certain amount of money. I know several collectors who will not pay more than, say, $10 for *any* comic book, simply because it is not worth it to them; if it costs more than ten bucks, they shrug their shoulders and pass it by. Yet, you would be amazed at the depth of their collections!

Here are a few more watchwords: Grade strictly and haggle dealers mercilessly if they have overgraded their books (expect to be haggled back; but be *firm!*). Compare prices and shop around, particularly if you're buying fairly common books such as back issue Marvels, and don't get talked into buying books you don't need. Collecting with intelligence and discrimination is the key to beating comic book inflation.

X. Screw the Price Guide.

One of the most reprehensible suggestions to have come out of the recent fan press is to boycott the *Comic Book Price Guide* by withholding information from it, or to intentionally seed it with errors so as to make it valueless as a reference tool, in order to make it lose its hold over fandom. *This is stupid.* Blaming the *Price Guide* for comic book inflation is like pronouncing the rifle bullet guilty of the murder instead of the jealous husband.

Comic fandom *needs* a reference work of the scope and content of the *Price Guide*. Do you think that eliminating the *Guide* would prevent a dozen other versions from springing up? Rather than rendering the present *Guide* valueless, I would instead want to see a more responsible attitude towards the prices contained therein. Many dealers I know follow the *Guide* slavishly, and many collectors insist on a large percentage of *Guide* prices for their bulk collections when they sell to dealers. *Rigid adherence to what is nothing more than a guide to comic book prices is misusing it.*

The equivalent in philately to the *Price Guide* is *Scott's Catalogue*, a meticulously researched listing of all the different stamps ever printed in the world. When a stamp dealer buys in bulk, he might pay only one tenth *Scott's* for a collection. When he buys a smaller lot of choice material, he might pay a quarter to half *Scott's*, and when he buys a showpiece rarity, he could very well pay full catalogue value or more. The discount varies with the amount of work the dealer has to do in order to sort and classify the stamps before they are made available to the collector. Stamps are then retailed for particular fractions of the catalogue price, with choice items offered for as much as double their book value and weak sellers offered for a third of their book value. Stamp dealers do not wring their hands in anguish over having to sell a stamp at less than book value, because they know that the book is only a guide, and they know how much they paid for the item in the first place.

"Collecting with intelligence and discrimination is the key to beating comic book inflation."

One dealer at a recent convention I attended had a selection of comic books for sale. These books were completely unsorted and unpriced; in fact, he acknowledged to me that he had just picked up the lot on his way up to the convention (doubtless for a pittance; it looked like some kid's accumulation). There were a few books I was interested in buying, as a lot, from his selection. I was obliged to pick through the entire box of comics (because they were not sorted by title), and then to *wait* for him to price the books *individually*, according to the *Guide* (because they were unpriced). In other words, I had to do his work for him and then pay full catalogue for the books I had to rummage for. Naturally, when I found this out, he had no sale; and he will get no sale from me ever again. The books are common and will turn up in the future, so I lost little but time; but he has lost a good deal of his reputation with me.

The foregoing is an example of the way the *Price Guide* is misused. Rather than calculating how much the lot cost him per book and charging a suitable markup on the sale of sublots, he used the *Guide* as a crutch to justify trying to overcharge me for his books. Had the books been properly priced and sorted, I might have paid his prices; but it was totally objectionable to have to do his work for him and then pay for it.

As a final note, it should be added that the prices listed in the *Guide* are compiled from dealers' *for sale* lists (as far as I know), whereas the prices in *Scott's* are compiled mainly from prices realized at auction. Just because a dealer has offered a certain book for sale at a certain price does not mean that the book is sold at that price. This fact should be kept in mind when using the *Guide* to calculate how well or how poorly you make out.

XI. Steal comic books.

Where falsifying information in the *Price Guide* is reprehensible and unethical, stealing comic books is *illegal* and *dangerous*. If you are apprehended, you are liable to full prosecution under the law, and you will earn the enmity of respectable fans and possibly a behind-the-scenes assault by a group of irate comic dealers. Don't do it; you'll get stomped if you're caught.

XII. Build up a massive collection of key books.

Everybody decries the global inflation with which the world is beset these days. But there are people—a few—who reap great benefits from the inflation. These are mainly the shareholders in the corporations whose profits always show growth. What's irksome about the inflation is not just the fact that the cost of living is going up, but that there exist people to whom this simply doesn't matter. *We are not all in the same boat.*

The equivalent in comic collecting is owning and sitting on a large collection of comic books whose value is escalating. I know of at least one dealer who owns over a hundred copies of *Fantastic Four* No. 1, who simply put them away "for a rainy day" as they came through his dealership. What he paid for the books over the years can't be compared to what they could bring today. He has beaten comic book inflation by making it work for him and not against him.

Needless to say, it is extemely difficult to build up such a collection from scratch today. First of all, the books are not available in sufficient quantity any more, and secondly they are quite expensive. Anybody giving serious consideration to using this method of beating comic book inflation should be very rich, or should have started many years ago (or both).

But if you are not rich, and you still want to pick up all the key books, then pick up a copy of COLLECTOR'S DREAM No. 3, where I hold forth about the mechanics and desirability of financing your comic collection.

By Don Hutchison

THOSE MAD, MAD, MAD PULP VILLAINS

Everybody loves a bad guy.

. . . Not in everyday life perhaps, but in the larger-than-life world of vicarious thrills and adventure.

The great heroes of the pulp magazines could never have existed without an unceasing flow of enthusiastic nemeses. There were hundreds of pulp villains—thousands of them—cackling, scheming, dreaming. Each month a plethora of magazines shrilled news of their bizarre affronts:

"From out of the East swings the Oriental mastermind, Shiwan Khan, into New York in another attempt at world domination! . . . The mysterious power of the Orient against The Shadow's automatics as Shiwan Khan attempts to rule the world!"

"Shiwan Khan Returns" - *The Shadow* magazine, December 1939

"Over New York fell the murderous spell of Death's burning stare—and men died in the throes of some terrible, secret, inner fire! Richard Wentworth, alone as the Spider, dared challenge this astounding attack by a modern Genghis Khan gone mad . . . this new and fearful crime master who had blanketed Manhattan in the human ashes of his helpless victims!"

"Blight of the Blazing Eye" - *The Spider* magazine, April 1939

"He came from the very fires of Hell to blight the living, and he cared not for the cost of his lust! It was G-8 who had to meet this living scourge and match with his human courage and brains, a Lust and a Hate and a Scorn for Life such as The Earth Has Never Known!"

"Scourge of the Steel Mask" - *G-8 And His Battle Aces*, January 1937

If the bad guys were almost as popular as the good guys in the pulp hero magazines, it seems inevitable that sooner or later someone should have thought of starring a super-villain in his very own magazine. Oddly enough, that was not to happen until given the sales stimulus of an entire new breed of magazine: the weird menace pulp.

Illustration by Franc Reyes

The so-called weird menace field was conceived in 1933 when Henry Steeger, publisher of Popular Publicatons, decided to revamp the pedestrian and ailing *Dime Mystery* magazine. He used as his inspiration the nineteenth-century Gothic romances of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe combined with the visceral appeal of the legendary Grand Guignol of Paris, a theatrical company which specialized in the realistic depiction of scenes of torture, horror and bloodshed.

Infused with new blood (literally), *Dime Mystery* emerged as one of the best-selling titles in the pulp field. Under the canny editorship of Rogers Terrill, the new / old magazine was so successful that Popular soon issued two more titles in a sanguinary vein: *Terror Tales* and *Horror Stories*. Rival publishers trailed with *Thrilling Mystery, Eerie Mysteries, Uncanny,* and *Sinister Stories,* among others

Mild by the unshockable standards of the 1970's, the weird menace pulps were considered pretty racy stuff in their day; their stories flirted with sado-sexual themes and their covers usually portrayed girls in bras and panties (and sometimes even less) at the mercies of slavering nogoodnicks.

Even though the stories were seldom as salacious as the covers promised, these few magazines were largely responsible for the low opinion many people held (and still hold) of the entire pulp field. Many dealers sold them under the counter, and New York's mayor Fiorello La Guardia singled them out when he warned the pulp publishers to clean up their act—or else.

The weird menace yarns usually stuck to twentieth century settings but paid due homage to such trappings of Gothicism as: wildly-threatened heroines, storm-lashed nights, dank castles, Stygian caves, secret passages, and purple prose. Many of the top pulp fiction writers (Ray Cummings, Arthur Leo Zagat, Paul Ernst, and Norvell Page) churned out stories for this sub-genre. The writing was formula stuff, similar in many ways to the Gothic romance market of today, although decidedly more colorful.

The covers were great, though—especially if you have a taste for the preposterous; and who could resist such titles as "The Corpse Wants Your Widow," "Our Host, The Madman," "Mate For the Thing in the Box," "The Werewolf of Wall Street," and—my favorite—"The Corpses' Christmas Party ?"

It was only a matter of time before someone came up with the idea of combining the appeal of the pulp hero genre with that of the weird-horror pulps. The first hybrid burbled out of its cauldron in February of 1935

Its name was *Doctor Death*

In fact *Doctor Death* had been previewed a year earlier in a series of four short novels running in *All Detective* magazine. With the February 1935 number, *All Detective* became *Doctor Death,* thus inaugurating pulpdom's first full-fledged villain magazine.

Like all of the single character villain pulps to follow, *Doctor Death* failed to capture readers' fancies and the magazine lasted only three short issues. But what issues they were!

The first full-length Doc Death novel was called "Twelve Must Die" and it was credited to a writer with the single cognomen of Zorro—who was not Johnston McCulley's famed Robin Hood of California, but simply the penname of a pulpster with the unprepossessing name of Harold Ward. Ward, who died in 1950, was an ex-newspaperman, song writer and theatrical press agent who had achieved some success in the early pulps. He was one of the mainstays of the legendary *Black Mask* magazine when it began its life in 1920.

The character of Doctor Death as expounded by Ward in "12 Must Die" is certainly one of the wackiest, most entertaining villainous creations in the history of the pulps.

The world's greatest occultist, ex-Dean of Psychology at Yale, Doctor Death (or Doctor Rance Mandarin as he was once known) is described as a white-thatched, cadaverous figure with a thin face, hooked nose and weirdly-glaring, deep-set eyes. If a movie had been made of Doctor Death back in the 1930s the part could have been played to perfection by Ernest Thesiger, the late, great character actor who portrayed the wonderfully nutty Dr. Pretorius in Universal's *Bride of Frankenstein*

A habitué of caves and underground places, the old man is a human fungus who appears to have an affinity with the earth itself. It is this affinity perhaps that makes him one of the world's leading but most misguided amateur ecologists. Despite the author's assurance that "maggots of madness" are chiselling into the old man's brain like feasting woodpeckers, Death is portrayed almost sympathetically as a half-crazed old dotard who, deprived of his Messianic tendencies, would probably be content to while away his days, and especially nights, in his gloomy caves, caring for his fungi. His one fatal flaw is that he is sincere—a sincere fanatic, that is

Like John Brown, he believed that he had a mission—that an all-seeing Creator had placed him on this earth to accomplish certain goals, and that the mantle of sanctification made it impossible for him to commit a wrong.

In the name of righteousness Dr. Death had made himself master of the black arts: necromancy, sorcery, metempsychosis, demonology, divination—you name it. Backed up by regiments of Zombie stooges, dissolution rays, anti-gravity flying machines, and gelatinous, vermin-gray primal earth forces, the dedicated doctor waged a concerted attack upon 4000 years of civilization.

In order to destroy the plutocracy of science and hopefully return everything to a virginal state, Death selects as his target the world's leading scientists and begins to destroy them one by one, using methods both weird and singular. He delivers his ultimatum to a reeling society:

"The wheels of industry must stop. Scientists must cease their work. All patents in the United States Patent Office must be destroyed. The cities must be emptied and men must return to the soil. Eventually I intend to wipe out all cities as I have destroyed the aircraft plant of the men who disobeyed my commands. To do so now would cause the deaths of many innocent

©1966 Corinth Publications, Inc

In 1966 Corinth Publications reprinted all three Doctor Death *novels*

people, and I have no quarrel with the common man. I intend, therefore, to give the cities time to purge themselves before I blast them to dust.

"Two weeks from today, on August 24th, unless I see that steps have been taken to carry out my commands, I strike again. The national capital will be crumpled into dust and the dust scattered to the four winds of Heaven. Following that, another respite of two weeks will be given. Then I strike for the last time. When I have finished, not a plant of any consequence, not a machine, not a building of importance will be left in the hemisphere."

Tough talk! But Doctor Death had the werewithal to back it up.

Arrayed against him in his fight for the Good Life were a handful of recurring characters, principal among them being Jimmy Holm, the ostensible hero of the piece. Jimmy's biography was true to the great pulp hero tradition. Orphaned at an early age, his father, dying, had placed his guardianship in the hands of the man who later became mayor of the great city. A millionaire many times over, Jimmy distinguished himself by his studies in chemistry, psychology and the occult, and later, after travelling extensively, had surprised his guardian by requesting a position in the city's detective bureau.

Jimmy's friend and superior was Detective Inspector John Ricks, a grizzled, honest "copper" who had clubbed and fought his way from a routine beat to the position of the head of the greatest detective force in the world.

Ricks and Jimmy are joined in their battle against Death by Nina Fererra, Mandarin's own beautiful niece who comes to recognize the extent of her uncle's madness.

Later, in a remarkable secret meeting held in a small town on the east coast, Franklin D. Roosevelt himself forms an organization known as the Secret Twelve—a dozen influential figures all concerted in their fight to curb Dr. Death's exaggerated Socialistic tendencies—headed by the President of the United States and with Jimmy Holm as his managing director.

In the meantime, the object of the Secret Twelve's vigilante justice was operating from a hideout only a quarter of a mile from Lake View cemetery, connected to it by a cavern once used as a burial ground by the ancient Mound Builders. A perfect spot for Death to function. It was here that the old fiend collected and stacked like cordwood hundreds of dead bodies in his recruitment drives for Zombie armies

"I am anticipating the future," he bragged to Jimmy Holm. "When the time comes that all mechanical activity ceases, there will be a need for additional labor. It will be hard for man to adjust to changing conditions. Nor is it the Creator's desire that humanity should become a race of slaves. These Zombies, then, must do the drudgery."

Like many of pulpdom's mad villains, Dr. Death had the natural pride of an originator. It was his fatal flaw. Over and over again, just when he should have been concentrating on the primary task of eliminating his chief antagonist, he took time out to justify his actions

Oriental villains were a staple of the average pulp-reader's diet.

or to brag about his genius. The consequence of such foolish technique is that "12 Must Die" ends happily for society with Death temporarily routed, his headquarters—and with it all his infernal apparati—burned to the ground. Nina is awarded The Congressional Medal by a grateful President and she and Jimmy announce their wedding plans.

But wait. One of the President's secretaries hands a wire to Jimmy, who glances at it and then hands it to the President to read aloud.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR APPROACHING WEDDING. TAKE WARNING: GOD GAVE ME THE RIGHT TO DESTROY AND THE WEAPONS WITH WHICH TO WORK. THE WORLD MUST BE SAVED FROM ITSELF AND I AM THE INSTRUMENT. I GO, BUT SOON I WILL RETURN.

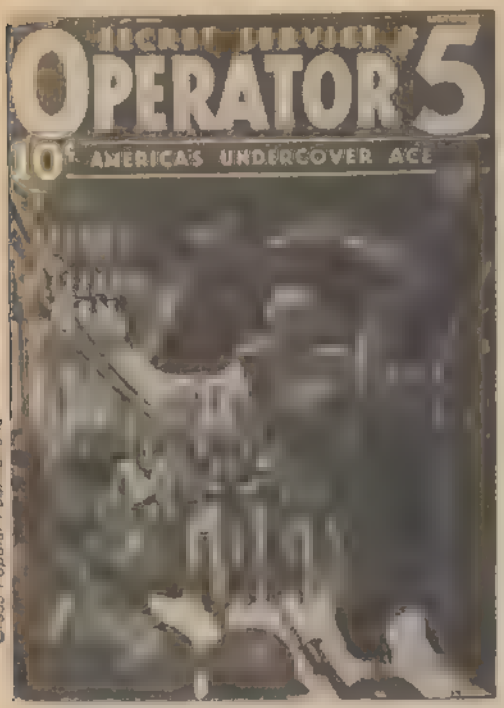
—DOCTOR DEATH

Return he did, and only a month later, in a story called "The Gray Creatures." That one began with Death's kidnapping of Nina and his consequent flight to Egypt in a scheme designed to bring civilization to its knees through instant overpopulation. Aware of the countless millions of Egyptions buried in the past whose bodies had been preserved through mummification, the diabolical doctor envisioned bringing to life hordes of men and women who had walked the earth thousands of years before Christ. He pictured a world flooded by living corpses, every spot as thickly settled as New York City.

Needless to say, he was eventually foiled in his scheme—but only after a dozen cliffhanger scenes of chills and thrills—and the novel ended with Death crushed beneath an avalanche of rock in far-off Egypt.

Death epic number three, "The Shriveling Murders," began with a remark-

Pulp villains specialized in global catastrophes.



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able scene in which President Roosevelt called together a special meeting of the Secret Twelve. With trembling fingers, the President removed from his briefcase a small shoe box done up in brown wrapping paper.

"This arrived at the White House by special delivery late this afternoon," the President whispered. "Look!"

He lifted the lid. In the box was the tiny figure of a man, perfect in every detail, yet smaller than a new born infant.

It was the body of the Vice-President of the United States.

But that was only the beginning. The President proclaims a State of Dictatorship. More great men shrink right out of their clothes. There is a lovely but sadistic Egyptian princess; voodoo rites in the Louisiana outback; horrific doings beneath an asylum for the homicidally insane, poisoned postage stamps; the theft of Cagliostro's secrets from the Library of Congress; and last but not least, Death's final confrontation, in the gloomy caverns on the little island in the middle of his beloved swampland.

There was a fourth Dr. Death announced—"Murder Music"—but it never appeared due to poor sales and the consequent demise of the magazine. The manuscript of "Murder Music," along with a fifth unpublished Death novel, still exists in the collection of New Jersey pulp collector Jack Irwin. It would be nice to think that someone will eventually see fit to publish those manuscripts because, whatever else you may say, they certainly don't write them like that anymore.

Meanwhile, over at *Weird Tales*, the legendary magazine (under the editorship of the equally legendary Farnsworth Wright) was undergoing some lean days. Circulation was down—despite its fame, the magazine at the best of times was seldom far out of the red—and Wright was concerned that the new weird menace pulps, *Terror Tales* and *Horror Stories*, might be draining off some of his o'1-time readers. In retrospect it seems doubtful that this was so due to the fact that *Weird Tales* had long established its reputation as a quality vehicle for literate tales of imagination and the supernatural. The weird menace pulps, on the other hand, appealed blatantly to less sophisticated readers who did not demand writing above a cliché level and who, in fact, preferred mundane explanations for supernatural trappings.

Wright attempted to appeal to both factions when in August of 1935 he introduced a new series character to the pages of "the Unique Magazine." That character, Doctor Satan, is included within the scope of this investigation not because he was ever honored with his own magazine but because he was an obvious blood kin to Doctor Death (they may have attended the same medical school) and because he was linked to the other super villains yet to come.

Loyal *Weird Tales* readers must have been startled when they witnessed Margaret Brundage's cover for that landmark issue. Her painting featured a masked figure dressed in an outlandish devil's costume complete with horns and scarlet cape. The cover blurb shrilled: "Meet the sinister and mysterious Doctor Satan—the world's weirdest criminal."

If the character on the cover appeared to be dressed somewhat ludicrously, it was not because Ms. Brundage embroidered the author's initial description of Satan's habiliment: "The figure looked like one robed for a costume ball, save that in every line of it was a deadliness that robbed it of all suggestions of anything humorous or social.

"Tall and spare, it was covered by a blood-red robe. Red rubber gloves swathed the hands. The face was concealed behind a red mask that curtained it from forehead to chin with only two black eyes, like live coals, showing through the eyeholes.

"Lucifer! And to complete the mediaeval portrait of the Archfiend, two horned red projections showed above the red skullcap that hid the man's hair."

While Doc Satan may not have looked like your average pulp maniac, his actions certainly qualified him for that elite brotherhood.

In the editorial pages of that debut issue, Wright somewhat nervously announced: "We await with eager interest your verdict on the stories about Dr. Satan, the first of which is published in this issue...To those of you who are afraid that *Weird Tales* will degenerate into just another detective magazine, we definitely promise that it will not do so...If the stories about Dr. Satan and Ascott Keane—the world's strangest criminal and strangest criminologist—are ordinary detective stories, then we do not know a weird story when we see one."

There was little danger of the astute editor not recognizing a weird tale when he saw one. In the first story, titled simply "Doctor Satan," sides are drawn; the hero of the piece is a criminal investigator named Ascott Keane (love that name!), a man who has "raised a hobby of criminology into an art that passes genius." Keane is clearly patterned after Sherlock Holmes, that Victorian archetype whose hawk-visaged face and steel-trap mind were seminal influences on many a pulp hero.

The Investigator is accompanied by his "secretary and companion" beautiful Beatrice Dale, while Satan is backed up by a monkey-like man named Girf and a legless giant named Bostiff, proving once again that a man is judged by the company he keeps.

In the first story hints are given as to Satan's real identity: that of a rich man, still young, with a family name known to everyone in America, a man jaded with purchased thrills who has made a study of super science and the occult in order to become the world's leading criminal.

Satan makes his criminal debut with the aid of a little science and more than a soupcon of the occult. He begins by blackmailing and then destroying millionaires by his unsettling use of a species of Australian thornbush. Altered by the malefic doctor's botanical skills, the thornbush seed, a tiny thing that floats in the air, is first inhaled by the victim and then roots itself in his brain before flowering a mere hour or two later.

When the doctor finds his scheme threatened by criminologist Keane, he trots out his second little surprise: a destroying voodoo flame first compounded in temples along the Nile some 5000 years ago. Keane counteracts with the green paste which the old priests used against the consuming flame of their enemies.

"I'll not underestimate you a second time," Doctor Satan warns. "The death shrub—the blue flame—you are armed against those. But I have other weapons."

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"If the stories about Dr. Satan are ordinary detective stories, then we do not know a weird story when we see one."

©1936 Ace Magazines

©1938 Popular Publications

Not all the pulp menaces were oriental; with some you couldn't tell.

We can [heh, heh] only guess at what demented thoughts are crossing the minds of the fiends above...

The Mephistophelian inventor unleashed his other weapons in the string of seven novelettes which followed "The Man Who Chained The Lightning," "Hollywood Horror," "The Consuming Flame," "Horror Insured," "Beyond Death's Gateway," "The Devil's Double," and "Mask of Death."

Satan's arsenal included static electricity bombs, Cretan voodoo dolls, a time diverter, occult dragons, and a deadly crystalline lightning tube. One of the arch-fiend's choicest pieces of blackmail machinery involved an atomic ray which he used to realign the molecular structure of skin. Beaming the ray from a movie light, he was able to change the world-famous faces of Hollywood stars into grinning skulls—and right in the middle of a take.

As the series progressed Ascott Keane followed Dr. Satan into the realm of death itself, discovered that there was an actual Hell...and had cause to wonder if his red-cloaked foe was in fact the incarnation of Old Scratch himself.

The Dr. Satan stories were all turned out by Paul Ernst, a popular and prolific writer whose name was a staple in the weird menace sub-genre, and who later wrote the Avenger novels under the famous Kenneth Robeson by-line. In addition, Ernst was already well known in the pages of the Unique Magazine. One of his non-Doctor Satan stories "The Way Home" (*Weird Tales*, November 1935) is considered a near-classic in the field. Ernst's Satan yarns were all competently written and are still fun to read, but it soon became evident that loyal *Weird Tales* readers wanted no part of the formula.

"Glad you left out Dr. Satan," one indignant fan wrote in the magazine's letter column. "We readers can struggle along very nicely without him. A super detective against a super crook has no place in a magazine devoted to Weird Tales."

Fearful that more old readers would be repelled than new readers attracted Wright could only concur and the series was peremptorily dropped.*

Stimulated by the advent of the doctors Death and Satan, the folks at Popular Publications (who started the whole thing when they revamped *Dime Mystery*) decided to come up with a villain magazine of their own. They used as their model Sax Rohmer's immensely successful creation, Dr. Fu Manchu.

An entire book could, and should, be written about the Yellow Peril theme which was prevalent in the literature and theater of the West in the first half of this century. No matter what depths of ignorance and paranoia it sprang from, the menace of the Yellow Peril certainly added thrills and chills to literally thousands of motion pictures, plays, books, magazines and even comic books. Today it is a quaint footnote in the history of pop literature—an era of adventurous menace which a more tolerant and more sophisticated society can no longer endorse.

Sax Rohmer more than any other writer brought world fame to London's Chinatown in the East End Limehouse District. In Rohmer's day the area was a badly-lit maze of alleyways where opium dens actually flourished and cutthroats really stalked. It was there, in 1911, that young Arthur Henry Ward recorded his first glimpse of "Mr. King," Chinatown's uncrowned ruler of crime.

"I knew that I had seen Dr. Fu Manchu!" Ward said. "His face was the living embodiment of Satan." That same year, Ward, writing under the pseudonym of Sax Rohmer, finished the first of the Fu Manchu thrillers which would bring him lasting fame and would influence the entire body of popular literature.

* Another Doctor Satan appeared in 1940 when Republic Pictures released a 15-chapter serial titled "Mysterious Doctor Satan." On the surface it appeared to bear little relation to the old pulp series, particularly since the movie Dr. Satan (played by screen villain Eduardo Cannelli) sported a "costume" which consisted of little more than a business suit and a sneer. Strangely enough, many of the lobby cards for the serial illustrated a character with cape, cowl and horns almost identical to the pulp Satan. Furthermore, in a recent interview, Republic actor Henry Brandon revealed that this was the studio's original conception of the character. Probably a coincidence, but an interesting one for pulp and serial fans.

"If the public confused Wu Gang with Fu Manchu, the confusion could only aid the sales of the humble pulp magazine."

Rohmer was not the first to exploit the Yellow Peril theme (a good decade earlier some of M P. Shiel's novels were of the Oriental-hordes-invading-the-West type), but he certainly did it with more style and with decidedly more impact on the mass collective unconscious. Furthermore he added his own wrinkle: not just an individual Oriental menace, but a secret international organization consisting of criminous types representing all races and countries.

Small wonder that Popular's first all-villain pulp should be titled *The Mysterious Wu Fang*. In 1935, when the Wu Fang magazine made its debut, the name of Fu Manchu was already a household word; the Fu Manchu books were best sellers and they were usually serialized in such prestigious slick magazines as *Collier's* and *Liberty*. If the public confused one character with the other the confusion could only aid the sales of the humble pulp magazine.

Oddly enough, the name Wu Fang was in itself not completely unknown at the time of his pulp magazine debut. As early as 1915 Arthur K. Reeve, creator of Craig Kennedy the Scientific Detective, had featured an Oriental mastermind of that name in his Kennedy novel *The Romance of Elaine*. The villainous creation was carried over into the Pathé serial version starring serial queen Pearl White.

Silent movie audiences must have responded to the thrill of the Yellow Peril because Wu Fang became Miss White's own saffron menace in a number of early chapter plays. In one such thriller, *The Lightning Raider* (1919), he was portrayed by Warner Oland, a Swedish actor who later graduated to playing Fu Manchu himself as well as the decidedly non-villainous Charlie Chan.

For a few years there was even a British Wu Fang; his adventures as related by Roland Daniel appeared first in *The Thriller* and later in such books as *Wu Fang* (1929), *Wu Fang's Revenge* (1934), *The Son of Wu Fang* (1935), and *The Return of Wu Fang* (1937).

The character Wu Fang also turned up in comic strips (notably Dan Dunn, Secret Operator 48) and in comic books as well. Unlike Sax Rohmer's menace, old Wu seems to have been in the public domain, a sort of unlicensed yellow terror."

Doing their best to add to the identity crisis, the publishers of Wu Fang obtained the services of illustrator John Richard Flanagan, a fine commercial artist who had illustrated all of Sax Rohmer's stories in *Collier's* from 1929 to 1935 as well as the American book edition of The Mask of Fu Manchu.

Known alternately as the Emperor of Death and the Yellow Dragon Lord of Crime, the mysterious Wu Fang was described as a tall, gaunt figure with sloping shoulders, his mouth was pinched and narrow, but the upper part of his face above the hideously gleaming green eyes widened to a forehead of great brain capacity. He usually wore a yellow silk robe embroidered across the front with a dragon—and was thus depicted in Jerome Rozen's excellent cover paintings. (Jerome was one of two brothers—the other was George—who helped brighten the world of pulp covers)

Rozen's depictions were true to the mood of the Wu Fang stories, which in turn reflected the entire Rohmerian netherworld of secret passages, dank caves, trap doors, Egyptian tombs, poisonous creepy-crawlies, and the ubiquitous hordes of leering acolytes.

When the publishers at Popular Publications first decided to do a Fu Manchu type character, they chose as their writer Robert J. Hogan, the creator and author of their highly successful magazine *G-8 And His Battle Aces*. Hogan, the imaginative storyteller who also wrote the *Secret Six* magazine, was at the height of his powers and was churning out an incredible 200,000 words a month, sometimes even writing the short stories and editorial features needed to fill up the balance of his magazines. He accomplished this awesome word count by working six-day weeks, employing two full-time secretaries, and never ever looking back.

Editorship of *Wu Fang* was handed over to young and pretty Edythe Seims, who was also a veteran of the *G-8* magazine.

Seims and Hogan were no strangers to themes of Oriental menace, author Hogan once invented a Chinese villain—the infamous war lord, Chu Lung—and managed to work him into G-8's adventures on the Western Front during World War One!

Under Hogan's guidance Wu Fang emerged as a worthy godson of the notorious Devil Doctor. Like his prototype, he operated at first from Limehouse London but the everlasting contest between Wu Fang and his

* According to Raymond Stedman's book *The Serials* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1971) it seems there was even a real-life Wu Fang (full name Wu Ting Fang) who wrote the book *America Through Oriental Spectacles* the real Fang was the Chinese minister to Washington prior to fictional use of his good name.

heroic adversaries soon spread around the world.

Playing the Nayland Smith to Wu's Fu Manchu was Val Kildare, former number one investigator of the United States Secret Service

The hero of the original Fu Manchu books, Nayland Smith, was British through and through—a character based, in turn, on Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Val is, of course, American but on occasion he reveals his literary ancestry with such Anglicized exclamations as "Jove, what a pity."

One of the *Wu Fang* magazine editorials even went so far as to compare Val directly to the Great Detective of Baker Street: "Out of sheer modesty we concede that Mr. Kildare has not as yet attained the prominence of Sherlock Holmes. But being younger, we are convinced that he can not only think as clearly, but can run faster and fight harder than the distinguished gentleman from Scotland Yard. (sic)"

Aiding Kildare in his battle against the sinister symbol of the night is young Jerry Hazard, a newspaper reporter. Jerry is eventually crippled and retires voluntarily from the fray in favor of a two-fisted explorer and archaeologist named Rod Carson.

Their wily nemesis played it safe by employing hundreds of helpers, although he preferred the company of female slaves. Old Wu was unlucky in love, however—he thought that whips made up for caresses. As was often the case in pulp melodramas, his number one aide, a beautiful girl named Mohra, fell in love and ran off with Jerry Hazard. Later still, Wu's tall, blond helper, Tanya, began making eyes at Rod Carson. No wonder Wu was mad

Ever faithful to him were such staunch buddies as Zaru the beast man, who was part ape, and Djiga, who was described as being the most repulsive of Wu's agents Djiga was keeper of the Death Beasts—a poisonous menagerie of vipers, spiders, bats, and scaly mini-monsters that combined the worst features of the lizard, the toad, and the rat

Wu employed these and other little pets throughout a series of seven fast-paced novels beginning with "The Case of the Six Coffins." He was killed off in his sixth caper ("The Case of the Black Lotus") but the following month saw him resurrected from his glass sarcophogus That particular yarn ("The Case of the Hidden Scourge") sent the saffron scourge packing off to Bagdad hot on the trail of electrical secrets first developed by Nebuchadrezzar when he illuminated the ancient hanging gardens. Nebuchadrezzar's secret suggested a plan whereby one man (guess who?) could fry every person on earth who uses electricity.

True to format, "The Hidden Scourge" ended with wily Wu once again in shackles, his shocking scheme short-circuited

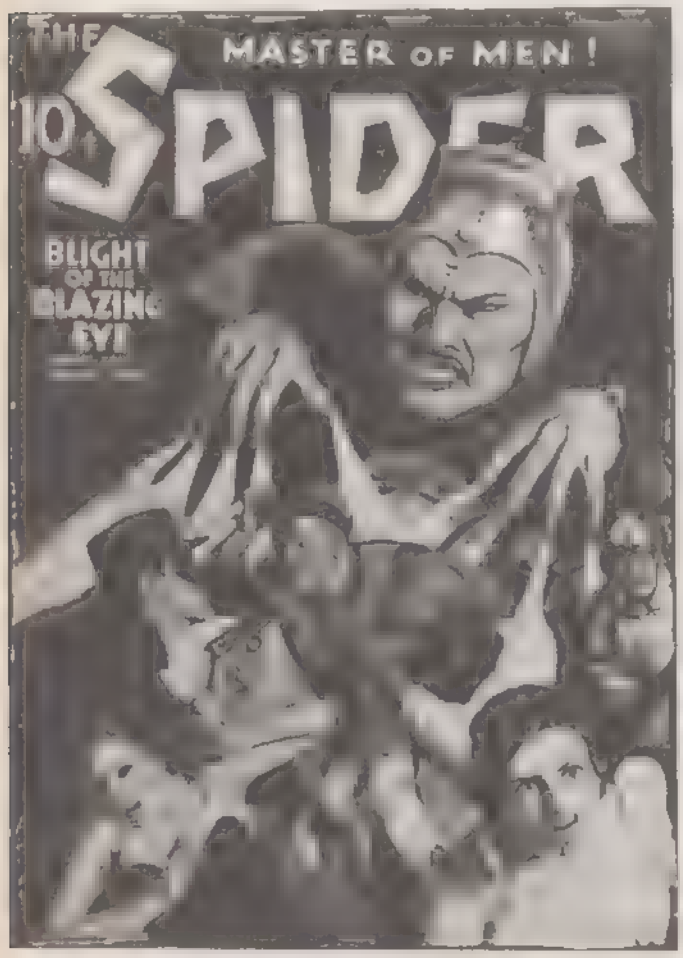
"It is written," Wu Fang cooed through his thin, cruel lips, "that defeat is often nearest when victory appears to come "

The Dragon Lord of Crime was to have the last word. His statement was the last one uttered in the final issue of the magazine.

It is not certain whether the *Wu Fang* title was discontinued because of poor sales or because Sax Rohmer may have finally balked at the use of a name so close to that of his famous creation. In any case, the folks at Popular must have retained faith in the idea of an Oriental menace magazine; after a mere two month's breather they put out still another title—*Dr Yen Sin*

Yen Sin as portrayed on Jerome Rozen's cover looked suspiciously like his predecessor, Wu Fang. In fact the cover was commissioned for the eighth Wu Fang novel, "The Case of the Living Poison," which was announced but never issued It seemed to matter little since both characters were based on the same model—Fu Manchu.

The editor of the new magazine was Ken White. Interior illustrations were handled by Ralph Carlson, and the novels themselves were written by pulp writer Donald E. Keyhoe—the same man who as Major Donald E. Keyhoe is well known today as the author of five best-selling "fact" books on UFO's, including *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy* and *The Flying Saucers Are Real.*



©1939 Popular Publications

Sometimes it was difficult to tell the heroes from the villains on the covers of the pulps.

©1936 Popular Publications

Dr. Yen Sin was Wu Fang's immediate successor in the yellow menace genre.

Keyhoe shifted the scene from London's Limehouse to Washington D.C. It is a Washington that must have seemed foreign to Americans of the year 1936: fog-shrouded, mysterious, deadly, with dark doings in places both high and low. (Think of it...this is forty years before Watergate; Yen Sin probably ranks as the most prophetic pulp to precede John Campbell's *Astounding Science Fiction*.)

"Fog, like a sinister cloak, had swept in from the Potomac, enshrouding Washington in its clammy folds. By nine o'clock, the Capital lay buried under an ocean of drifting mist, the lights of Pennsylvania Avenue only blurred yellow spots in the almost impenetrable gloom.

"Unseen cars crawled along the famous thoroughfare, the hoarse blasts of their horns muffled in the evil smelling murk. Shadowy forms moved like phantoms in the fog.

"But there was one shadow which did not move.

"Almost invisible in the blackness of a shop entry, stood a motionless figure. Except for its low, harsh breathing, it might have been a dummy—a wooden figure placed there to draw attention to the trinkets in the window. But the window was dark, and the shop was closed.

"Minutes passed, and still the shadow did not move. There was something more than ominous about that crouching form. It was as though Death itself lurked there in the fog, inexorably waiting.

"Just once, the man's arm lifted. For an instant, blurred light from the nearby restaurant fell on a dark-skinned hand, on a curious silken noose gripped between powerful fingers. Then the hand was jerked back, and the strangler's cord was swiftly hidden from view..."

From those opening paragraphs we are plunged into an unrelenting world of night, a universe dominated by mystery and murder...and even worse. Burmese blow guns poke from raised coffin lids. Innocent-seeming chair covers conceal Dacoit stranglers. Beams of emerald flame cut through walls and windows. Torture chambers beneath the Potomac. Corpse-Flowers from Tibet. Mummies that sing. Corpses with their heads sewn on backwards. It's the formula as before, straight from that special world of magic and menace which only Sax Rohmer could have inspired.

Yen Sin, known also as the Crime Emperor and the Invisible Peril, was more or less interchangeable with other Oriental menaces (one can postulate a medical college somewhere in China which specialized in graduating Evil Doctors). His eyes were a *de rigueur* green, although sometimes they flashed tiger-tawny yellow, and sometimes his pupils enlarged like hypnotic black pools—bottomless, malignant. Yen's symbol was a cobra. He was taller than most Chinese—an expert might have traced the Manchurian blood which coursed in his veins—and his feline grace was accentuated by the silken folds of his mandarin costume.

Fortunately, the good guy of the piece, Michael Traile, was considerably more interesting than most. Traile was known as The Man Who Never Slept, predating Lawrence Blochman's "Thief Who Never Slept" series by several decades.

Traile had been the youthful victim of a hasty brain operation by a Hindu surgeon. His horrified parents had discovered after the operation that the surgeon had damaged the lobes of the brain controlling the function of sleep. An Indian Yogi had saved his life by teaching him the art of relaxing his body completely, even though his mind would ever be awake.

"That's the reason for my hobbies—my studies—my eternally keeping busy," Traile once confided to his adventurous side-kick, Eric Gordon. "Be thankful that you can lie down—close your eyes, and shut out the world for a few blessed hours. I have never known a single instant of forgetfulness—in twenty-seven years!"

Traile's functional apartment contained no bedroom, thus frustrating Yen Sin who, like Fu Manchu, made a habit of springing surprises on sleeping adversaries. Instead, the apartment was a maze of exotic weapons, gun cases, lamps, swords, carvings and curios from scores of countries. The objects were like monuments down the long vista of sleepless years, even to the language books on his table—reminders of Traile's endless search for new challenges to ward off the desolation of endless nights.

While most of us would consider his affliction a blessing—he had his nights free to read and bone up on all the world's knowledge—Traile himself considered it his Achilles heel. He had an imperative need for recharging his vitality by frequent rest periods; prolonged action without any yoga-like relaxation would bring on a state of exhaustion terrifying in its sudden effect. He knew that not even sheer agony, not a stunning blow, could blot out his wakeful brain. Death was the only sleep he would ever know.

Despite this intriguing hero-with-a-hangup, the new magazine was even less successful than its predecessor. The career of the Crime Emperor was terminated after three brief forays into print. (Sales were not the only reason; publisher Steeger has since related that he yanked the magazine off the stands when someone pointed out that Yen Sin sounded like a hebrew expression meaning cohabitation.)

As in all the super-villain magazines, the series had no resolution. At the end of the third novel, Dr. Yen Sin remained still at large. Somewhere in the Valhalla of pulp villains, Wu Fang and Yen Sin must still exist, plotting their evil schemes, dreaming their insane dreams.

Two of the strangest and most puzzling of all pulp magazines were *The Octopus* and *The Scorpion*. The magazines lasted but one issue each and one was really a follow-up to the other. They were both written by Norvell W. Page (under the pseudonym Randolph Craig), who for ten years was to chronicle the incredible adventures of the Spider—surely the most fantastic and most flamboyant of all the hero pulps.

Both *The Octopus* and *The Scorpion* revealed Page's predilection for fantastic invention and far-out melodrama. The first and only issue of *The Octopus* (listed on the contents page as Volume 1, Number 4 for no accountable reason) contained an editorial feature which attempted to explain something of the magazine's new slant on villainy.

"The pages of man's history are crowded with strange and awesome legends," the editorial began, "weird, unauthenticated tales of monstrous beings and eerie happenings. Of them all, perhaps the most fantastically grewsome (sic) is the little-known legend of the 'Purple Eye.' All the evils of mankind (so runs this legend) can be blamed upon the men with purple eyes. During every great social catastrophe in

"The Scorpion revealed Norvell Page's predilection for fantastic invention and far-out melodrama."

history, purple eyes have made their appearance as harbingers of destruction....Randolph Craig—an author of national reputation who has assumed this *nom de plume* for the purpose of this series—has, in the pages which follow, revived this figure out of ancient legend. He has made of him a modern super-criminal who, for protective purposes, has assumed the name of The Octopus. And he has given him all those truly weird and terrifying powers which modern science can bestow upon a great intellect."

Other than that outré historical footnote, there is no more attempt to explain who The Octopus is, or what fuels his insane rage. He is the consummate, interchangeable master villain: a madman willing to destroy human society in order to dominate it.

Physically the Octopus would draw second-takes in any crowd, even in today's liberated milieu. He is described as a weird sea-green thing with four suction-cupped weaving tentacles above hideously malformed legs. He wears a small, pointed mask; beneath the mask a purple light glows and behind the light—two gigantic luminous eyes.

If the Octopus himself was a little strange, he was hardly more so than his chief antagonist. The hero of the book was a young millionaire philanthropist named Jeffrey Fairchild. Like many another pulp hero, and especially those created by Norvell Page, Fairchild is not content with one simple identity. In fact not even two distinct identities are good enough for him. Within a few pages of the story Jeffrey is revealed in a weird, triptychal personality split.

At least part of the time he is Jeffrey Fairchild, son of the late Dr. Henry Fairchild, who had achieved medical fame and a sizable fortune before his death. Jeffrey, as administrator of his father's estate, had been instrumental in the erection of the Mid-City Hospital and in the further allowance of the large sums necessary for the hospital's upkeep

Jeffrey's own younger brother, Robert Fairchild, was a long-time patient in Mid-City Hospital; the youth's body had been permanently crippled by ruthless criminals It was from that traumatic incident that Jeff's interest in crime-fighting had started.

His brother's illness, both physical and mental, had taught Jeff that healing must go deeper than he had imagined. With the use of a grey wig and makeup, he sometimes had been able to fight more battles for the poor in his slum neighborhood than by confining his skill solely to the struggle against disease

It was Jeff's third identity that led the reader to suspect the lad's own sanity, for in an even greater effort to root out the malignant growth of crime in the community body he assumed the role of the dreaded Skull Killer.

The legend of the Skull Killer had flared to life when three insurance policy racketeers were found one by one, in various lonely corners of New York, with raw outlines of skulls burned into their foreheads. The weapon used had been a metal stamp fashioned in the shape of a skull; in the middle of the stamp: a single steel spike. The tooth of the skull had been used like the exacting thunderbolt of an ancient god, and when the victim fell he bore the Mark of the Skull as a death-sign.

In the underworld, the Skull Killer was a dread legend, and the Mark of the Skull was known as a declaration of war to the death. Among the police he was regarded benevolently, though each fresh killing brought assurances from the Commissioner's office that the Skull Killer would shortly be brought to justice.

As a man trained to heal rather than injure, Jeffrey was aware that his work as the Skull Killer was violent surgery, but he also believed that there were times when nothing short of radical operation could keep the patient alive—the patient in this case being society itself.

This theme of ruthless vigilante justice was a popular one in the pulp magazines of the 1930s (and no one was more skillful in its employ than Norvell Page). It was a theme that popular entertainment would return to in the 1970s with the advent of such controversial films as *Death Wish* and *Dirty Harry*, and in a rash of pulp-inspired softcover novels along the lines of Don Pendleton's best-selling "Executioner" books.

What made the 1930's stories drastically different from their modern counterparts was the imaginative scope of their plots, inspired no doubt by the flagrant schemes of their larger-than-life villains.

The Octopus, for instance, was clearly no semi-sympathetic Sicilian father figure. Instead, he was he genuine article: a real honest-to-God pulp madman.

Consider as evidence this opening vignette in "The City Condemned to Hell." Gentle old Dr. Skull (Jeffrey Fairchild) has taken in a woman who has been found battered and half-crazed, the victim of an inexplicable assault that left her almost drained of blood. Then the good doctor discovers—to his horror—that his patient has no pulse or heartbeat, and that her blood is of the temperature and approximate consistency of sea-water! And she moans repeatedly something about an octopus...

The scene in question begins when Dr. Skull hears a scuffle behind the curtains which veil Mrs. Purvins from the rest of Ward Seven. He brushes past the curtain and finds—

"Mrs. Purvins' mouth was fastened like a suction pump on the nurse's bosom, and in the staring grey eyes there was stark, maddened hunger!

"Dr. Skull seized his patient's shoulders, his muscular fingers pulled against that sucking, intractable force even as gasped at the hideous strength of those hungry lips...Then, with a soft *woosh*, he pulled her clear

"The nurse dropped like a dead weight, with a three-inch circle of raw muscle bleeding over her heart, and even more terrifying in its implications, he saw the shredded, torn remnants of part of her uniform on the floor!

"The thing that had been his patient turned its shining unhuman eyes on the doctor. Suddenly it reared—not on its legs, but with a swift upward surge that seemed to involve every molecule of matter in its body. He felt the white surgeon's jacket torn from him as though it were cheesecloth, and suddenly he understood why the nurse had been unable to give alarm when she had been attacked.

"The Thing's clammy hand slapped against his mouth, jammed into his throat, nearly suffocating him, while with the swiftness of a striking snake, that terrible mouth fastened on his shoulder, its suction rending his skin, tearing with intolerable pain at the muscular flesh beneath.

"He lunged desperately with arms and legs—felt himself free, and gasped for air. He cried out then, trying to call for help as his staring eyes saw his erstwhile patient rear up at the window, and with a peculiarly undulating movement slip outside. He staggered after it, his fingers clutching the sill as the Thing descended the fire escape with unbelievable rapidity...And then he saw something else that momentarily caused him to forget his pain, and his horror.

"As the Thing passed the third floor, a snakily prehensile arm whirled a net from the window, trapped the creature that had been Mrs. Purvins, and pulled her back inside the hospital.

"And that, he knew, *was one of the windows opening from the maternity ward!*"

What in the name of reason is going on here?

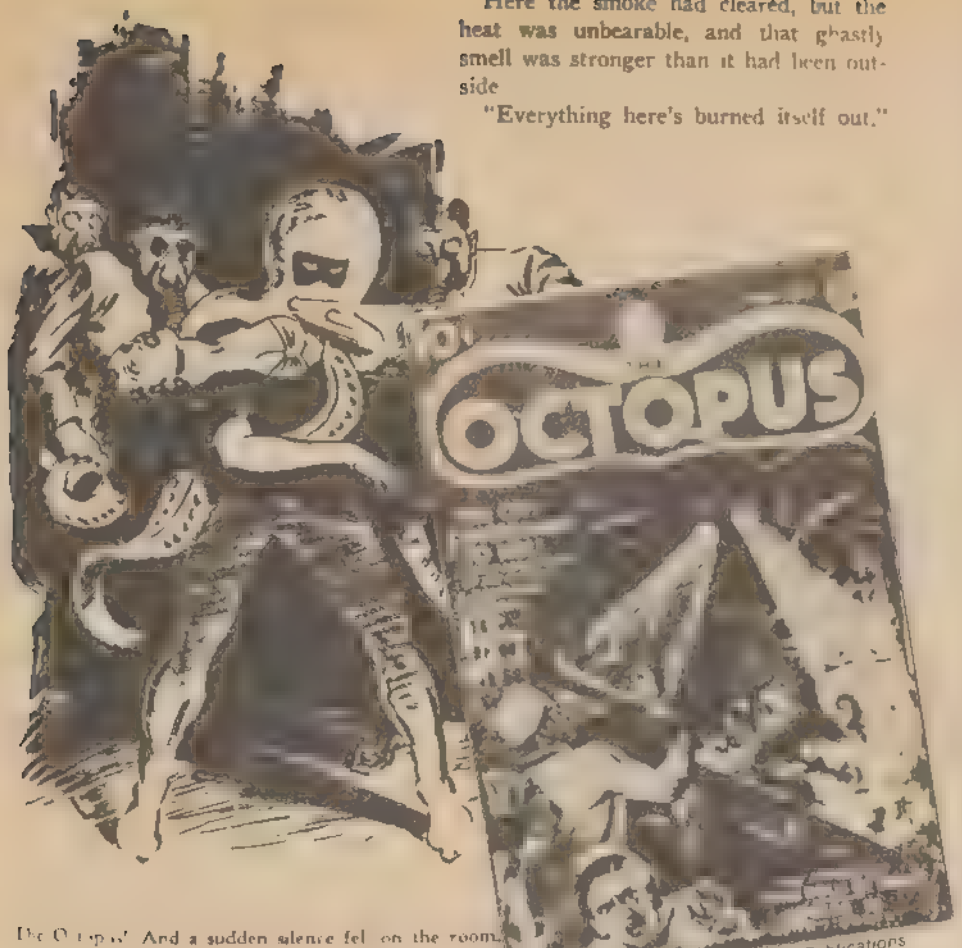
Well, it seems that our friend the Octopus has created an army of atavisms—once ordinary men and women who have had millions and millions of years of evolution lobbed off their heritage. They have suffered some kind of evil sea change. And now, as the city sleeps, they come crawling from their subteranean sanctuaries to perform the tasks set out by their octopod mentor.

Entrenched in the very heart of Manhattan, in a new skyscraper citadel aptly called the Victory Building, the Octopus beams out a purple arm of death—an ultra-violet ray—to sweep away his enemies. Each night a dreadful cavalcade—malformed creatures that once were human—pour forth from their secret places as if summoned by the awful beam.

New York City is in a state of siege, the first pawn in a master plan for world conquest.

As in most pulp character novels, things get a lot worse before they get better. The Octopus beams in on Jeff's beloved Mid-City Hospital, demolishing the building entirely. Within a few lightning-paced chapters, some eight million innocent victims have been destroyed (you got a lot of spectacle for your dime back in those days). What's worse, Jeff's alter-ego, Dr. Skull, is condemned as their murderer.

All's well that ends well, however—as another famous hack writer once said. By the time page 63 rolls around, a bewildering array of plot complexities have been resolved, the Octopus and his fishy minions have been routed, and Jeff takes over as the new owner of the once infamous Victory Building. He plans to turn the edifice into a haven for the sick and injured, a logical substitute for his devastated Mid-City Hospital. Considering the number of sick and injured by this point, one can only hope that it's a mighty BIG structure.



Here the smoke had cleared, but the heat was unbearable, and that ghastly smell was stronger than it had been outside

"Everything here's burned itself out."

The Octopus! And a sudden silence fell on the room.

©1939 Popular Publications

"The Octopus was a real honest-to-God pulp madman."

"But the Octopus—that incredibly evil personality who had been the skyscaper's first master—would his presence really be gone forever from the place he lorded? Jeffrey recalled those old legends of the Deathless One, and he couldn't swear that the man was dead. It had been impossible to identify all the mangled bodies after that dreadful revenge

"Jeffrey sighed. He had done his part in the freeing of his city; he could only continue to do his part in the interests of its welfare. If sometime in the unpredictable future that essence of evil threatened once more to test its malignant, deadly powers, the new owner of the Victory Building would have to do his part again..

Poor Jeff didn't have long to wait

Precisely one month later his specialized services were required again in what appeared to be a new magazine—*The Scorpion*.

Despite the magazine's disclaimer, the Scorpion was really our old friend the Octopus wearing a new fright mask The lead novel, "Satan's Incubator," was an obvious rewrite of what was to have been the second Octopus story, with all references to the Octopus altered to that of the Scorpion. All of the other major characters remained the same.

Physically, the cowled figure of the Scorpion appeared to be more human than the tentacle-waving Octopus—if it hadn't been for a birthmark extending from his forehead to his chin. Black and as clearly outlined as a shadow at noon, the disfigurement is the exact replica of a scorpion

While the super fiend's stigma is less grotesque than in his previous incarnation, his brain is honed to even greater nastiness

This time the chastened but wily maniac has discovered the benefits of working within the Establishment. Operating through the city administration itself, he has somehow fashioned a huge base beneath Manhattan, the symbolic entrance to which is the city's main garbage incinerator. A fleet of Scorpion-controlled garbage trucks are equipped with the latest in hellish gadgetry: hypnotic brain rotors capable of turning ordinary citizens into packs of murder-maniacs

"Last week," announces a Scorpion henchman at a secret council meeting, "we had three trucks making rounds in the city, equipped with four brain rotors each. Even with that meagre equipment, we were able to bring several score new subjects a day to the Scorpion. Now, we have fifty trucks ready to start as soon as the new rotors are put in. Six of them will be equipped with one multiple brain rotor capable of transforming twice as many subjects as the old-type engine, in one-tenth the time."

Good old American know-how in action! Furthermore, the Scorpion has the ruthlessness to see that his new-found slaves stay in line You think you're familiar with nastiness? Witness this scene in the master fiend's incinerator headquarters; the Scorpion is addressing his lieutenants.

"What you are about to witness will sharpen your faculties immensely," he promises. "You, Gordon, you were a veterinary once. I want you to perform an operation on this man Dugan. Take him into the inner room and amputate his legs. Be careful about it—I want him to stay alive and in good appetite. When he comes to, if he requires a fluid diet, offer him broth brewed from his own legs. Nothing else As soon as he can stand it, take off the arms. Those four chunks of meat should have enough nourishment to last him a week. If he wants something solid, fry him a piece of his own ham."

How's that for nasty?

Fortunately for the citizens of Fun City, Jeff Fairchild is around in his guise as the villain-hating Skull Killer.

As in the previous Octopus novel, the plot of "Satan's Incubator" contained enough elements for half a dozen normal pulp stories. As he had proven over and over again in his long-running Spider series, Norvell Page's nerve and imagination knew few bounds when he gave them full reign. Page had a finely-tuned sense of melodrama as well as the compleat pulp writer's ability to make the preposterous believable Well.. almost believable.

Suffice it to say that by the time the final chapter rolled around much of New York City was in ruins (again), and the good guys were about to pull themselves Phoenix-like from the Scorpion's funeral pyre

"The city would be as it had been before—except for a thousand empty places that had been filled before these two days of horror. How long would it be that way? No man could have survived who remained below ground during that terrific explosion—but was the Scorpion a man, and no more? For the leader of the Purple Eyes could not die, the old legend had stated—and everything else in the legend had proven true.

"Jeffrey touched the Stamp of the Skull Killer in his pocket. If the City were attacked some time in the future, that was the only answer he knew."

The stamp of the Skull Killer was to remain in Jeff's pocket because no other issue of *The Scorpion* ever appeared. Perhaps the bizarre two-faced villain and his tripartate protagonist were too far-out even for the wild and bloody pulps

Perhaps readers simply didn't take to magazines which honored criminals in their titles.

In any case, the quick death of the *Octopus / Scorpion* brought an end to the all-villain pulp magazines. It was the bad guys' last hurrah.

Today, these magazines are among the scarcest of all pulps. They fetch inflated prices from collectors—anywhere from fifty to two hundred dollars a copy, depending on title and condition—an interesting fact when you consider what must have been reader resistance to laying out the original cover price: a modest ten cents

Not counting the Dr. Satan stories in *Weird Tales*, there were only five pulp villain titles ever published—fifteen novels in all. The entire sub-genre came into existence and perished forever with those fifteen issues. Various arch-fiends would continue plaguing the great pulp heroes right up until the final gasp of the pulp themselves, but never again would a villain have a magazine all to his very own.

The publishers had learned the bitter lesson which their readers already knew:

Crime Does Not Pay.

POSTSCRIPT:

The writer feels duty bound to warn his innocent reader: *never* attempt to read a number of pulp villain novels over a short space of time (as was perforce required in the execution of this article), to do so is to incur serious injury to one's health, both physical and mental—especially mental.

Nevertheless, for the curious and / or masochistic out there who feel strong enough in body and mind, here are a number of relatively inexpensive reprints which you may be able to search out:

Neo-pulp publisher Robert E. Weinberg has printed facsimile editions of *Wu Fang* No. 1, *Dr. Yen Sin* No. 1, as well as *The Octopus* and *The Scorpion* Copies are still available at $5 00 each from dealers, or they may be ordered directly from Bob Weinberg at: 10606 S Central Park, Chicago, Illinois. 60655.

Weinberg has also put out a collection of Dr. Satan stories from *Weird Tales*. Several other of the Satan yarns were reprinted in the 60s in the Robert A. Lowndes magazine, *Startling Mystery Stories*. Copies of SMS can often be found in used book stores.

All three *Doctor Death* novels were reprinted in softcover form in 1966 by Corinth Publications of California. They are difficult to find today, but can be purchased occasionally from used book dealers for about three dollars each.

The best (in fact the only) study of the weird menace pulps of the 1930s is Robert K. Jones' delightful, profusely illustrated book *The Shudder Pulps* (FAX Collector's Editions, 1975). Copies of the book are still available from most fantasy specialist dealers.

A CHECKLIST OF THE VILLAIN SINGLE CHARACTER PULPS:

DOCTOR DEATH by Zorro (Harold Ward)
Feb 1935 Twelve Must Die
Mar 1935 The Gray Creatures
Apr 1935 The Shriveling Murders

WU FANG by Robert J Hogan
Sept 1935 The Case of the Six Coffins
Oct 1935 The Case of the Scarlet Feather
Nov 1935 The Case of the Yellow Mask
Dec 1935 The Case of the Suicide Tomb
Jan 1936 The Case of the Green Death
Feb. 1936 The Case of the Black Lotus
Mar. 1936 The Case of the Hidden Scourge

DOCTOR YEN SIN by Donald E Keyhoe
May 1936 The Mystery of the Dragon's Shadow
July 1936 The Mystery of the Golden Skull
Sept. 1936 The Mystery of the Singing Mummies

THE OCTOPUS by Randolph Craig (Norvell W Page)
Feb. 1939 The City Condemned to Hell

THE SCORPION by Randolph Craig (Norvell W Page)
Apr 1939 Satan's Incubator

Don Hutchison is a freelance film maker and writer who has made a study of the pulp fiction magazines of the first half of this century. In addition to his collection of rare pulps he maintains an extensive library of science fiction, fantasy and detective literature. His articles on the pulp heroes of the '30s and '40s have appeared in journals as disparate as The Globe and Mail *and* The Monster Times *He also writes a column for Canada's long-running weekly review the* Penny Dreadful

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Illustration by Ken Steacy

WARDWORLD

DEPT. OF UN-EARTH-LY *UN-EARTH-LY* COINCIDENCE

To anyone who's been reading superhero comics for any length of time, the concept of parallel worlds is a familiar one. This idea was, of course, first made an integral part of comics in the classic *Flash* No. 123, "Flash of Two Worlds", which explained that the adventures of the present-day DC characters take place on Earth-One, while the tales of their Golden Age counterparts from the '40's happened on Earth-Two, a vibratory twin of our planet in another dimension of space. Since then, other "Earths" have been introduced, including Earth-Three where all super-characters are villainous, Earth-X where the old Quality Comics heroes held forth, and Earth-S, home of the former Fawcett heroes such as the Marvel Family in Shazam. And of course it has become fashionable to refer to the world of the Marvel Comics characters as the Marvel Universe, or simply Marvel-Earth. (All this is beautifully explained and expanded upon in *A Treatise on Reality in Comic Literature* available for $2 50 from the author, Mark Gruenwald, 1260 Westhaven Drive, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901. Free plug, Mark)

All of the foregoing, however, ignores one factor: the place of ourselves, the comic readers, in the scheme of things. For several years, I'm sure DC readers believed that we inhabited Earth-One, although none of us had ever encountered any super-heroes in the flesh. This assumption should have been anathema to any readers old enough to remember the '40's, all of whom had been assuming during those years that they lived on the world now designated Earth-Two, and were now confronted with an entirely new "reality" in which Barry Allen and Hal Jordan were the Flash and Green Lantern respectively, and Jay Garrick and Alan Scott were suddenly alien strangers. Perhaps the fact that perennial favorites like Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman retained their familiar alter egos of Clark Kent, Bruce Wayne, and Diana Prince softened the blow for these older fans. In any case, no one complained of culture shock. (Later still, we would learn that Supes and Bats weren't really the same guys as before, either, but that's another story.) Marvel readers, meanwhile, were encouraged to think of Marvel-Earth as home by such things as its identical geography, possessing a New York City and not a Metropolis or

Murray R. Ward

Gotham, and the presence of "real" people such as Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and JFK in the stories themselves. But such simple explanations proved to be false.

Once again the ground-breaking story appeared in *Flash*. In No. 179's "The Flash—Fact or Fiction?", Cary Bates began his scripting career with a tale introducing the world later named Earth-Prime, where comics characters are not real, but instead are only...comics characters! Comic publishers such as DC (and presumably Marvel) are real on Earth-Prime, but the super-heroes they portray are purest fiction. The question is...is Earth-Prime the Earth we know?

Mark Gruenwald says no. He theorizes that the presence of a "mutant" Cary Bates who travels between the dimensions and whose scripts control reality to an extent on Earth-One is, along with other factors, grounds for supposing that Earth-Prime is yet another parallel world. He gives our own world the label Earth-Real.

Whatever you call it, it's interesting how events on our own world have a corollative effect on the comic-book Earths. In some instances, the comics-creators have counterparts in those other worlds, and in other cases, the writers and artists' activities seem to exert an unconscious influence over events in the worlds they portray, or vice versa. For example:

In 1968, Roy Thomas got married. In 1968, in *Avengers*, a book Roy scripted, Yellowjacket and the Wasp got married.

In 1974, Gerry Conway got married. In 1974, in *Fantastic Four*, a book Gerry scripted, Quicksilver and Crystal got married.

In 1975, Steve Englehart got married. In 1975, in *Giant-Size Avengers*, a book Steve scripted, the Vision and the Scarlet Witch got married.

Crazy, huh? Or how about this:

Everybody knows that Funky Flashman, introduced in *Mr. Miracle* No. 6 and revived recently in Secret Society of Supervillains, is a DC-Earth counterpart of Marvel's bossman, Stan Lee. But did you realize that there is now a Marvel-Earth counterpart of DC's new bosslady, Jenette Kahn? Her name is Carol Danvers, better known as Ms. Marvel!

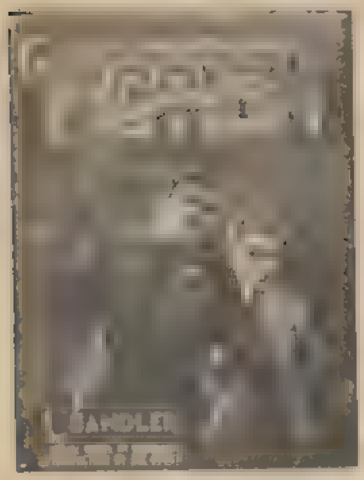
I know a lot of you are going to tell me Ms. Marvel is Marvel's answer to Wonder Woman, since both are women's-lib oriented characters, or that she is a counterpart of Supergirl, since both have the same last name and both have had Jim Mooney as artist. But it seems obvious to me that Ms. M. is Jenette. Consider: They're both liberated women, both about the same age, both in the publishing profession. Carol's foil in most stories in J. Jonah Jameson; Jenette's competitor is Stan Lee—and how many times have you heard Stan compared to J. Jonah? The final proof will be when Ms. Kahn gets a sudden headache, then zooms out the window of 75 Rockefeller Plaza in her alter ego as...Dynamic Chick!

If anyone out there can think of some more of these "strange coincidences", write and let me know and I'll make a column out of the best ones. By now, you know I'll use any excuse to get feedback mail. Send it all to the usual address: Murray R. Ward, P.O. Box 3693, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA.

Murray R Ward was born between the last issue of All Star Comics *and the first issue of* Uncle Scrooge *and has been into comics since they helped teach him to read Currently a student of English and Film at the University of Manitoba, he is also a science fiction fan of long standing and regularly contributes articles to several fanzines*

free plugs

This section is provided as a public service to readers of COLLECTOR'S DREAM. The publications described below have been found to be most useful and interesting to us, and we recommend them unreservedly to comic fans everywhere.



CHANDLER

"RED TIDE", A Chandler Novel by STERANKO, Edited by Byron Preiss, Pyramid Publications, 757 Third Avenue, New York City, $4.95, 128pp.

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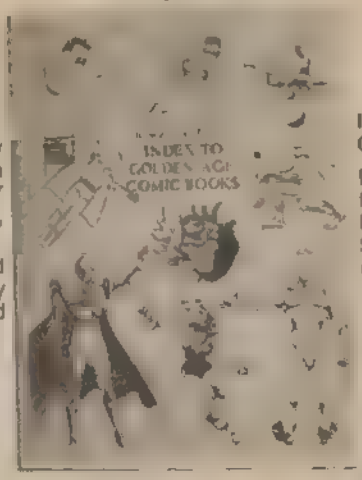


INDEX TO GOLDEN AGE COMIC BOOKS

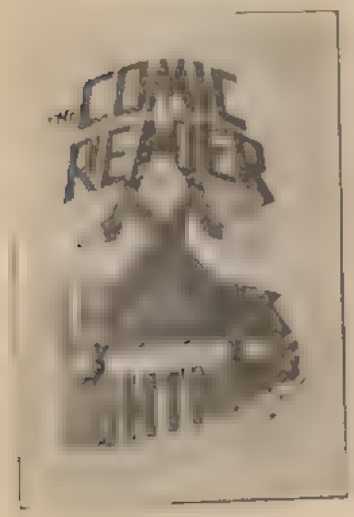
By Howard Keltner. Available from Jerry Bails, 487 Lakewood Blvd., Detroit, Michigan, 48215, $4.75 postpaid. Comprehensive index to the hero comics of the 1940's and 1950's. A labor of love.

CHEAP THRILLS

Concert Productions International, P.O. Box 214, Postal Station A, Mississauga, Ontario L5A 2Z7, $6.00 for 12 issues, 40 pp. Reviews of the rock scene. We unabashedly ripped off the format of this little magazine, so we're reciprocating with a free plug!

MEDIASCENE

America's new magazine of popular entertainment. Published by Steranko, SUPERGRAPHICS, Box 445, Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, 19610, $1.50, $7.50 for 6 issues. Beautifully laid-out publication devoted to popular culture in multimedia, from comics to the cinema.



THE COMIC READER

Street Enterprises, P.O. Box 255, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051. Sample copy 60 cents, 32 pp. Reviews and a checklist of the month's coming comics from *all* American comics companies. Just one of several excellent Street Enterprises projects.

ROCKET'S BLAST / COMIC COLLECTOR

Published by James Van Hise of the S.F.C.A., 6351 S.W. 43 Street, Miami, Florida 33155, U.S.A. The grandfather of all comic fanzines, RBCC sets standards for fan publications everywhere

COMIC MEDIA NEWS

Britain's No. 1 newszine. Published by Richard Burton, 22 Woodhaw, Egham, Surrey TW20 9AP, England, 42 p. postpaid, 24 pp. News, reviews, interviews. The British comic scene in a nutshell with plenty of good reading for comic fans everywhere. L2 for 5 issues

WHOS WHO OF AMERICAN COMIC BOOKS

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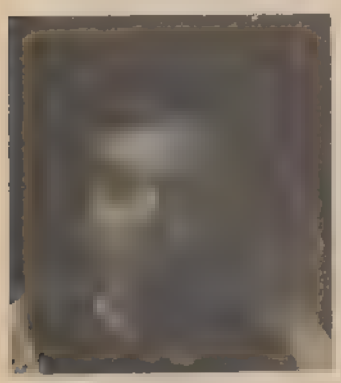
[Lest readers of this magazine think we are leaning a bit too much on the financial aspects of comic collecting—what with our editorials and now Joe Krolik's first Brainstorm—let me say that Joe's column was received well before COLLECTOR'S DREAM *No. 1 was published. The opinions and ideas expressed below are Joe's alone, completely independent of my own and totally unsolicited. Honest! The extreme similarity of his choice of topic to that in my editorials indicates that the issues are pressing and relevant. It is gratifying to know that kindred souls exist out there and that fiscal dialogues are beginning to take place among comic fans. The inflation in the value of back issue comics, and in their newsstand cover price, menaces the hobby immensely. Had more articles on intelligent spending appeared in the past, perhaps the runaway inflation would not be haunting us today. — G.O.]*

Some Opinions on Comic Investing



·BRAINSTORMS·

By Joseph D. Krolik

It's the eleventh hour. I'm perpetually fascinated by the eleventh hour. I consistently manage to send in my column at the eleventh hour. I guess it's a function of the society in which we live. *There isn't enough time for things.*

ARE COMIC BOOKS WORTHWHILE FOR YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE?

Today we got the news that Australia and a couple of other countries devalued their currencies. These currencies were very strong. It tells you where things are going (as if you didn't already know). Canadian currency value has also dropped after the Quebec election results. So, with money going down in value, is it wise to invest in something perhaps more permanent?

Comic books are a transient medium; they could go one way or the other. Indeed, the industry itself has been facing its own financial complications during the past several years. We've seen the results in the funny pricing fluctuations they've given us. We've had more price changes in the past four years than all the rest of comic book history put together. We've had more size changes to go along with price changes. Similarly, the collectors' market has been unstable. I should know. I've just come out of a long tenure as a comics dealer.

Consider market trends. Five years ago we sat around bemoaning the fact that a mint copy of Action Comics No. 1 was outrageously priced at $300.00. Then Mitchell Mehdy came along. Suddenly Timely Comics came out of a long stagnation and the prices shot up. Recently, a very nice copy of Marvel Mystery No. 1 sold for $8000.00. To think of such a price even a year ago was crazy. It's happening again with Marvel Comics: we are seeing some very strange prices on the early Marvel issues. Is there a pattern to these trends? No. The trick is being able to capitalize on them.

The situation was brought home to me recently. I got a letter from a young fellow who said he was having trouble getting by on $5.00 a week allowance. I had to stop a second and think. When I started out, I used to get by on *fifty cents* a week. That wasn't in prehistoric times, but it might as well have been. One must consider that there are way more new titles these days. Still, it takes your breath away!

My first piece of advice is to budget yourself. Be frugal. Are you buying a title because you enjoy reading it? If so, continue. Are you buying a title because you are just keeping a set going and you can't really afford it? Stop. Who cares? You can decide how you want to limit your collection. It's your decision and the money could be better spent on back issues.

My second piece of advice is to set goals for yourself. What do you want to collect? How far back do you want to go? You must structure your buying to complete your collection systematically. Once each step is achieved you can broaden out a bit further within your budget. Above all, if your income is limited, you have no business trying to compete with someone who is self-sufficient and can afford all titles.

Let us next consider current items as investment potential. The two schools of thought disagree here on how to go about things. One school states that it is good to stock up on early issues of everything in depth. The other says be selective. I say use judgment tempered with some control. No one can predict when a *Howard the Duck* No. 1 or a *Conan* No. 1 will come along. Perhaps a good rule of thumb might be to judge the distribution of an issue to determine its future merit. In both cases in point our Winnipeg stands were absolutely GLUTTED with copies, and they were *sitting* there. No one was buying them. They were sleepers. (Now you know WHERE all those copies went to!)

Is the return worth the effort? On most current items I would say that anyone expecting a large short term return is fooling himself. Comics are currently 30 cents going on 35 cents. A reasonable price for a demand issue once it's off sale for about 6 months is 50 cents. If you are buying, say, 10 copies for resale, your return is only $2.00 profit over a $3.00 investment. Many would say this is good, but *is it worth the effort?* On the other hand, when one can afford to buy 100 copies, the return becomes $20.00 profit. This is probably a good figure at which to limit yourself if you can afford it. Below this the return is too low. Above this it is too hard to find a market for unloading the stock. Mind though that this depends again on the item in question. I'd give my eye teeth for 100 copies of *Howard the Duck* No. 1 right now at 30 cents each!

This brings up the question, What about the long term? If you are a small investor and you can afford to store 10 copies of each item you select for a period of time, you stand to gain appreciably. A good example is *Conan* again. I won't cite the *Duck*, because it is not what I would have called a solid investment. It was more a fluke. Anyone who held on to 10 copies of Conan No. 1 for five years realized an excellent return for their original $1.50 investment. The trick is to pick a *solid demand* item which will appreciate steadily. It's a real gamble in any case.

My advice: If you can afford to play around a bit, by all means trust your intuition and store some copies of something away for a rainy day. Be selective. Don't go overboard on quantity. Plan to keep the items for several years, barring a sudden price rise. Patience is the key. All things come to him who waits.

Back issues are a much more lucrative and secure investment, even given the current situation. For example, a good copy of *Fantastic Four* No. 1 which last year brought between $100 and $150 will currently bring a minimum of $200 to $250 depending on your situation. The key to successful investment in back issues is knowing supply and demand. On some items the demand is already present and the market governs itself. Some other items have an artificial demand created for them. A sly individual can do this for any issue if he does it subtly. Currently I can recommend no issues to pick on. Perhaps *Conan* No. 1 is still a best bet.

People ask, Is it worthwhile to invest in issues at grossly overinflated prices? I believe that it may be. Prices inflate far faster than the value of the dollar shrinks. A mint copy of *Fantastic Four* No. 1 purchased now for $400 is probably a sure bet to bring between $750 and $1000 within a year and a half at the most. One dealer *already* advertises at $750.

My advice with regards to Marvel Comics is to pick the cornerstone issues. You can't go wrong. Perhaps the only really sound yet inexpensive issue left is, as I said, *Conan* No. 1. A mint copy can still be obtained reasonably for about $30.00. Within a year this item could be selling for double this amount. Please note that I have always spoken of pristine copies, as these are most in demand. You must gauge your potential when investing in lesser condition.

What about Golden Age Comic Books? My first impulse is to tell you to find a little old lady with a trunkfull and make a killing from her. That's about the only way to do it these days. Unless you have a lot of money you are not likely to be able to pick up key books with a reasonable degree of security as to return. The risk of investing $4000 for a really nice copy of *Marvel Mystery* No. 1 is probably too high to be outweighed by a $1000 to $2000 profit. This is because the market for such an item is limited and everyone knows it. I believe that the extraordinary prices recently asked for some items and *received* are exceptions to the rule. Still, if you are one of the few who can play around with $4000 with no sweat, why not?

My advice on Golden Age Comics is to purchase the items you want, with an eye to *keeping them*. Unless you have a gold mine in your home, the risks and returns don't make up for the ulcers you'll get fooling around. If you see a bargain, by all means buy it and hang on for a while if you can. Otherwise be satisfied with the reprints.

The last frontier is obscure things. For example, many DC and Marvel (Atlas) issues which came out in the 50's are not easily found anymore. Have you noticed how those issues of Action between No. 225 and No. 250 are starting to command up to $3.00 each? Perhaps here lies the best field of opportunity for the collector with limited means. After all, 1960 is almost 20 years ago. (Jeez, it seems like yesterday!)

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE?

Money. In collecting circles there are the collectors and there are the dealers. You are either one or the other. Perhaps a collector who dabbles now and again is the exception. But I learned this the hard way. This is Slobodian's first law of fandom.

Krolik's second law states: For every item at a given price, there will be someone who eventually buys it. On this basis the dealers seem to rest secure amongst their stacks of old comics.

I can't define in words what it is that motivates someone to want to get old comics. Perhaps this anecdote is a good explanation: When I was young and first started collecting (many of you were not born then), I would occasionally find a back issue, say, 6 years old. I would just be astonished at how that thing lasted for 6 WHOLE YEARS without getting destroyed! There was no fandom back then as we know it. It was in its pre-embryonic stages (i.e. Jerry Balls got the idea but didn't do anything yet). I suppose the fascination lay in the existence of the item per se. Not because it was special or rare, but because it was *there*. I would like to hear other opinions on this.

WILL PRICING TRENDS EVER CHANGE?

No. Why should they?

I admire the losing battles which some small groups in fandom are fighting, trying to keep back issue prices down. I admire it because I think of those thousands of neofans who are just turning on to this hobby and who never got the chance to get *F.F.* No. 1 for 10 cents. Hell, they never got the chance to get F.F. No. 1 for $100 in many cases!

But it's a losing battle. Anyone who can get an issue cheap and *know* they can easily get "x" dollars for it will do so. Why shouldn't they? People who sell within their own little cliques for comparatively miniscule prices are very generous. They are also very few. They will also find their supply drying up very fast. Sooner or later they will have to give in to the greater trends of fandom and the prices which are dictated.

No one ever said this was good. No one likes to pay $5 00 if they can get away with paying $4.00 (ask some dealers). But it is *inevitable*. Why, you ask?

One reason: Dealers are powerful enough now to set trends by themselves. For example, the *Price Guide* has fallen victim to them. The *Price Guide* is probably the single most valuable contribution to fandom that has come along in 15 years. But it's NOT because it gives values to go by. It's because it gives data and information on such a wide range of items all in one handy reference. It's own pricing system has fallen victim to dealers, and this has been brought up before.

The prices in the *Guide* are determined by averaging prices from within a sampling of dealers' lists. These list prices may differ considerably from the actual *selling prices*. You have heard of this as "in-dealing" between dealers. But, who's to say that someone can't advertise at ridiculous prices, have them included in the average and thereby shoot the overall price up? *It's already been done*. The sampling is not statistically sound.

Again, I'm not denouncing anyone for anything. The *Guide* is a great idea, the dealers are entitled to whatever they can sell books for (more power to them!), and it's a free country. What I am saying to you, the individual, is that you must look at things from more than one perspective to *understand* why things are happening. You can then judge trends for yourself. You can then collect and invest intelligently.

You don't have to worry about what Sam down the road thinks. You worry about building YOUR collection. You worry about staying within YOUR budget. You worry about enjoying the hobby in YOUR way, collecting what YOU want. Perhaps if everyone behaved like this we would have less the aura of an investment opportunity and more the aura of a rewarding hobby.

Hell, philately has NOTHING on us. If we'd only wake up and realize that we'd be better off!

THINGS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL:

Joseph D. Krolik was born Jan. 1, 1953, and has lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba all his life. He holds a bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry and currently attends the University of Manitoba, completing his last year in the Faculty of Pharmacy.

He originally nurtured an interest in comics at the age of two when he used to avidly scan stacks of comics loaned by his older brother. This initial fascination lead to steady collecting which began seriously in late 1962. Since then he has amassed an extensive super hero collection, including a complete collection of Superman *and Marvel Superhero Comics.*

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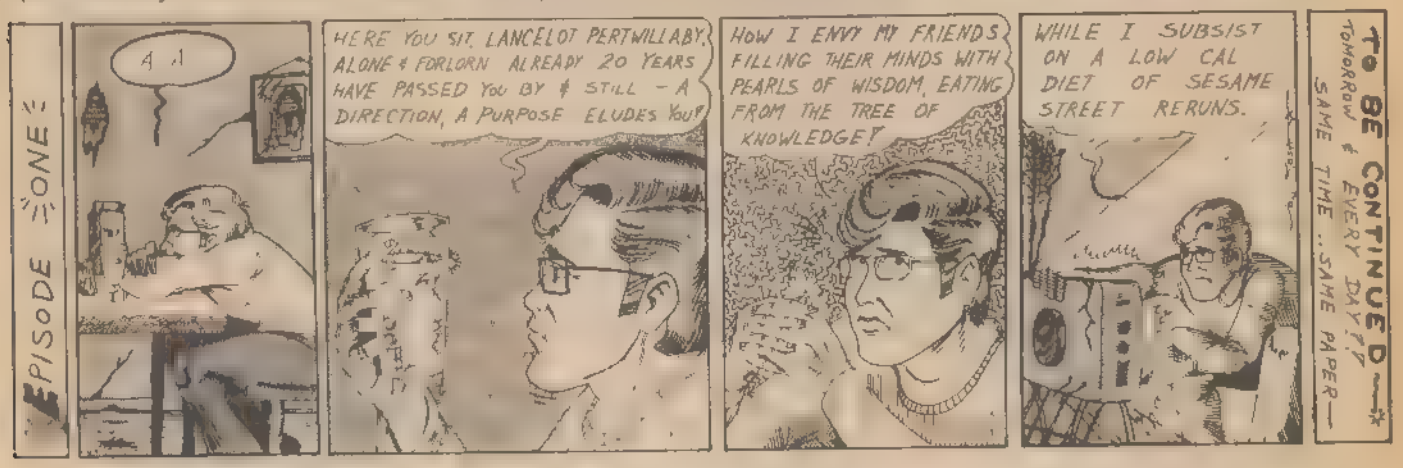
pertwillaby papers

Don Rosa who contributes a regular Information Center column to Rocket's Blast Comic Collector *and who owns a mind-staggering collection of comic books, is well known to* RBCC *readers as the author of the* Pertwillaby Papers—*the adventures of Lancelot Pertwillaby and Viktor Demetrius Smyte*

The comic strip, scripted by Don Rosa and Ron Weinberg originally appeared in the University of Kentucky's daily newspaper Kentucky Kernel *in 1971. Those episodes [No 1-65] are being reprinted for the first time in this and subsequent issues of* Collector's Dream. *The second series of episodes No 66-127 appeared in Kentucky Kernel in 1973 and were later reprinted in* RBCC *No 117-120. We will reprint them in serial order following the first sequence in future* Collector's Dreams. *Episodes No 128 and up are not in the "daily strip" format. Rather, they are entire twelve page stories. They appear currently in consecutive issues of* RBCC, *from issue No. 130 to date. Since these are still readily available to fans, we will probably not reprint them in the near future.*

It is our usual policy to provide photographs of our contributors, but we cannot this time because we have none. However, Don Rosa is said to resemble Lancelot Pertwillaby. It is also our policy to pay our contributors, but Don refuses to accept payment, claiming that working on the Papers is payment enough. We think he has a point.


EPISODE ONE:
A.A.
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WHILE I SUBSIST ON A LOW CAL DIET OF SESAME STREET RERUNS.
TO BE CONTINUED ~☆ TOMORROW & EVERY DAY!? SAME TIME ..SAME PAPER—

EPISODE 2: AS YOU RECALL, WHEN WE LEFT LANCE HE WAS PONDERING HIS SITUATION
AH, THE PLIGHT OF THE PENNILESS PAUPER PUMMELING DESPERATELY AT THE GATES OF INTELLECT
P-L-O-P
COME IN
KNOCK KNOCK
HAVE NO FEAR, FREDDIE KEGG IS HERE! HI THERE LANCE OL' BOY, HOW'S TRIX? STILL THE SAME OL LOVABLE WRETCH I LEFT WAY BACK WHEN?
YOU COMIN' DOWN TO SCHOOL WITH US THIS YEAR, BIG MAN?!
TO BE CONTINUED...

EPISODE 3: LAST TIME, FREDDIE KEGG ETERNAL FRATER RUSHLE & LANCES BEST FRIEND CAME TO VISIT
FREDDIE, I KNOW MY HAPPINESS YOUR EVERLASTING CONCERN ALAS, I LACK THE FUN TO ATTEND AN INSTITUT OF HIGHER LEARNING
IF ONLY A POOR BUM LIKE YOU COULD GO TO COLLEGE FER NUTHIN
TO BE CONTINUED!

EPISODE 4; AS YOU RECALL, LAST TIME AN IMMENSE LIGHT BULB APPEARED OVER LANCE'S HEAD—CONNOTING EITHER A SUDDEN INSPIRATION OR A PECULIECTION OF AN OVERDUE ELECTRIC BILL

WELL, GOTTA GO NOW—HOPE TO BE SEEIN' YA' DOWN ON CAMPUS?

EH... G'BYE, FREDDIE.

THAT'S IT! PERHAPS—JUST PERHAPS—I CAN FINANCE MY EDUCATION ON MY OWN RESOURCE-FULNESS!

CLIK

BETTER GET HACKED!

DON'T WANT TO APPROACH THE GATES OF KNOWLEDGE MALPREPARED.

COLLEGE

NAVY

NEXT EPISODE: LANCE HITS CAMPUS!!

EPISODE 5; AS YOU WILL RECALL, LAST TIME WE LEFT LANCE HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO THE BIG CAMPUS!...

O, STUPEFACTION! THE VASTNESS OF IT ALL... WHERE SHALL I FIND A DOMICILE??

HMM "PORLOCK HALL" PERCHANCE THE SOLUTION LIES WITHIN THESE WALLS...

SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURE. WONDER IF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HAD A T-SQUARE IN THIS...

MY STARS! I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THIS EDIFICE WAS COMPLETED...

NEXT EPISODE: ENTER SCHYLER ROATCH III

EPISODE 6; LAST TIME, AS YOU RECALL OUR HERO LANCELOT PERTWILLABY HAD JUST WANDERED INTO PORLOCK HALL...

HMM. POSSIBLY I COULD PROCURE THIS OBVIOUSLY VACANT CHAMBER.

THERE SEEM TO BE SO MANY. PERHAPS MY PRESENCE WILL GO UNNOTICED.

MY WORD—THIS SIDE OF THE ROOM SEEMS TO BE OCCUPIED...

BUT EVERYTHING'S IMPECCABLY PUT AWAY—IN ORDER...

G!!

GET YOUR GREASY PAWS OFF OF MY BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NUMBER THREE!

TO BE CONTINUED...

EPISODE 7; LANCE HAS JUST MET HIS ROOMMATE IN PORLOCK HALL, THE DORMITORY WHICH, THROUGH AN ERROR IN SCHOOL FINANCING, WAS NEVER QUITE COMPLETED.

I'M SCHYLER ROATCH III, I TAKE IT YOU'RE MY NEW ROOMMATE...

LET ME MAKE ONE THING CLEAR. I DISDAIN TOBACCO, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, GAMBLING, WINE, WOMEN, SONG...

...AND ANY REASONABLE FACSIMILIES THEREOF. I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO INSPECT FOR SUCH CONTRABAND AT ANY TIME IN THIS ROOM.

IT'S A SINCERE PLEASURE, MR. ROATCH.

!

TO BE CONTINUED...

EPISODE 8; OUR HARMONIOUS HERO IS TRYING TO BE AMICABLE WITH EVEN SCHYLER ROATCH III...

THAT SIDE OF THE ROOM WILL BE YOURS... THE DESK HAS A GHASTLY WAD OF GUM ON ITS UNDERSIDE & THE CHAIR WOBBLES
OF COURSE, THIS FURNITURE CANNOT COMPARE TO THAT OF MY PALATIAL ESTATE.
MUMSY HAS A DINING SET THAT GOES BACK TO LOUIS THE 14th!
HOW UNFORTUNATELY COINCIDENTAL I'M AFRAID MINE IS GOING BACK TO SEARS THE 27th.

TO BE CONTINUED...

EPISODE 9; AS YOU RECALL, LANCE & SCHYLER ARE STILL GETTING ACQUAINTED

THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW HOURS HAVE FAMISHED ME... WHERE DOES ONE PROCURE NOURISHMENT IN THESE ENVIRONS...
WELL, FOR THE MASSES THERE'S THE DORMITORY CAFETERIA TWO BUILDINGS OVER
OF COURSE YOUR MEAL-BOOK DOESN'T ENTITLE YOU TO MY FAVORITE, ROCK ISLAND LOBSTER
HAD I MY CHOICE, I WOULD PREFER TRUFFLES ET BOEUF AVEC FILET DE POISSOIN A' LHENRI TOPPED OF WITH A FINELY CHILLED CHABLIS '32 — BUT A CHEESEBURGER'LL DO FOR NOW..

NEXT EPISODE: THE CAMPUS POLICE!

EPISODE 10; AS YOU RECALL, LAST TIME WE SAW LANCE DEPART FOR HIS FIRST CAMPUS REFECTION:

ALL THESE STRUCTURES HAVE COMPLETELY OBLITERATED MY SENSE OF BEARINGS.
OFFICER, COULD YOU KINDLY POINT ME IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DORMITORY CAFETERIA?
ME BOY, SURE'N YOU'LL FIND THE BUILDIN' YOU SEEK IF YOU'LL WALK 50 HANDS TO THE EAST.
'N' IF YOU EVER BE NEEDIN' ME HELP AGIN, JUST BE CALLIN' ON YOUR FRIENDLY CAMPUS CONSTABLE, CHUTZPAH ISADORE O'FLANNIGAN.

NEXT EPISODE: CHUTZPAH'S FIRST CASE!?

THANK YOU, OFFICER
TOORA LOORA LOORA. TOORA LOO—R
UUUUGGGHNN
WH—A!? AS I LIVE 'N' BREATH — SURELY Y'KNOW THE RULE 'GAINST LOITRIN' IN TH' DORMITORY GREEN!?
UUUGGHNNN
HERE NOW, HERE NOW, I'LL BE HAVIN' NONE A' THAT!? SURE'N I'LL RUN YA' IN IF AN EXPLANATION IS NUT FORTHCOMIN'.. WHERE ERYA' FROM, ME BOY?
THE SEVENTEENTH FLOOR.....

NEXT EPISODE: BACK TO LANCE!?

AD RATES

AD SIZE	Width Height	PRICE	REPEATS
1 / 6 PAGE	(2½" x 5")	$10.00	$ 9.50
1 / 4 PAGE	(3½" x 5")	13.00	12.35
1 / 3 PAGE	(2½" x 10")	16.00	15.20
1 / 3 PAGE	(5" x 5")	16.00	15.20
1 / 2 PAGE	(7½" x 5")	22.00	20.90
2 / 3 PAGE	(5" x 10")	29.00	27.55
FULL PAGE	(7½" x 10")	39.00	37.05
INSIDE FRONT COVER		45.00	42.75
INSIDE BACK COVER		45.00	42.75
BACK COVER		50.00	47.50
CENTRESPREAD		73.00	69.35

All ads must be VERTICAL, BLACK AND WHITE, CAMERA-READY and SIZED. We can't absorb the costs of camera work at our current rates; however, screening of photographs and reduction can be done for $4.00 extra. If the same ad is to appear more than once, there is of course no screening or reduction charge after the first time.

NO MESSY OR OTHERWISE UNATTRACTIVE ADS WILL BE ACCEPTED. This includes cross-outs, super-dense typing, unclear handwriting. If you type your ad, be sure it is as BLACK AS POSSIBLE. If in our printer's opinion an ad will not reproduce clearly, we will not waste your money printing it.

EXTRAS: Don't hesitate to write us about any extras you may have in mind.

DISCOUNTS: Repeat advertisers may take a 5% discount off the total cost of their ads if they pay one month in advance. Should you want to change your ad after a while, this can still count as a repeat ad.

MULTIPLE PAGE DISCOUNTS: You may take a 5% discount from the total cost of your ads, providing you buy **more** than 2 full pages of ads in one issue.

TYPESETTING LAYOUT SERVICES

FULL PAGE	$30.00
2 / 3 PAGE	25.00
1 / 2 PAGE	20.00
1 / 3 PAGE	15.00
1 / 6 PAGE	10.00

Our typesetting and layout services will transform ordinary looking price lists and texts into beautifully legible pieces that will be real treats to read. All above charges are based on the average amount and size of type that is found in the pages of CDM. Should your ad contain much more than the average, there will be a small charge for the extra type.

When sending ad copy for typesetting, you must provide all extras such as: your own logo and any emblems or photos. Please note that all typesetting and layout charges are in addition to the ad rates.

DEALER RATES

All payable in advance

60 copy lot—(16.6 ea.) $ 9.95
120 copy lot—(15.8 ea.) $19.00

6 month 60 copy lot—$ 55.00
6 month 120 copy lot—$105.00

Collector's Dream is also handled by: Phil Seuling, P.O. Box 177, Coney Is. Stn., Brooklyn, New York 11224 U.S.A.

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Subscriptions
(as of March 31, 1977)

Third Class
$5.00 / 12 issues

First Class
$8.00 / 12 issues

Overseas orders are handled exclusively by: NICK LANDAU, 10 LADBROKE WALK, London W11 3PW England.

COLLECTOR'S DREAM MAGAZINE

G&T ENTERPRISES
P.O. BOX 127, STN. T,
TORONTO, ONT., CANADA M6B 3Z9

YES! PLEASE SEND ME ONE YEAR'S WORTH OF C.D.M.

☐ ONE BIG YEAR $5.00

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USE FACSIMILE IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CUT YOUR VALUABLE COPY OF COLLECTOR'S DREAM.

Subscriptions

KICK THE TABLOID HABIT!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY TO

COLLECTOR'S DREAM

Are you tired of being forced to advertise your wares in messy, poorly laid out, obscure, low circulation rags because nobody cares enough to publish a clean 'zine? Are you aggravated with having to stockpile dated or inaccurate material? Do you suffer from eyestrain caused by reading FADED TYPING? Are you annoyed with having to peruse petty opinions but no SOLID FACTS? Are you fed up with magazines which FALL APART IN YOUR HANDS (or the mail!) because they're not even held together by STAPLES??

Well... DESPAIR NO LONGER, Faithful Ones!! The solution is at hand:

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Next to a comic book, COLLECTOR'S DREAM is the BIGGEST BARGAIN IN COMIC FANDOM!

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COLLECTOR'S DREAM magazine features: Sound advice to collectors; art and articles by professionals; world-wide circulation; guest and feature columnists; comic strips and cartoons; interviews; free plugs; data and indexes; advertisements; shop-by-mail; low cover price; typesetting; and...STAPLES!

How can you obtain these little gems for your very own? Easy... SUBSCRIBE!!

COLLECTOR'S DREAM MAGAZINE

G&T ENTERPRISES
P.O. BOX 127, STN. T.
TORONTO, ONT., CANADA
M6B 3Z9

PLEASE SEND ME ONE YEAR'S WORTH OF C.D.M.

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ENCLOSED IS $ _____

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